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This report consists of five chapters: the first evaluates a theory of youth unemployment which particulary pertains to youths who are skillful in "nonstandard" competencies--the theory of competing competencies. The second chapter illustrates such behavior through the use of a case history. The third chapter presents empirical support for the theory based on data from two large-scale intervention projects. The development of standard and nonstandard competencies is the focus of the fourth chapter. The final chapter broadens the theoretical discussion and concludes by applying these ideas more precisely to youth unemployment manpower development programs. (Author)

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COMPETENCY AMONG HARD-TO-EMPLOY YOUTHS

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University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan
June, 1973

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview

Futurists have warned us for some time that we are rapidly approaching the day when automation and computers will eliminate the need for a large labor supply. They argue that when this occurs, society will be faced with serious social problems for which it had better be preparing itself. At such time, they presume, the bulk of the population, suddenly liberated from the burden of traditional work, may experience the pathogenic effects of prolonged inactivity and boredom brought on by mass unemployment. They also anticipate that the small portion of the population who must continue to work, i.e., caretaker support, to maintain the new ecosocial system in the age of "cybernetic unemployment," will feel that an injustice has been dealt them unless they are properly compensated. To avert these and other potential problems they argue that creative nonremunitive substitutes for work must be explored; that equitable criteria must be established to determine which few persons will have to work and how they should be rewarded; and, finally that effective arrangements must be made to provide income for many who will have no jobs, who will be sidelined by the continuous substitution of machines for men. Thus, while robots and self-repairing machines will have their economic benefits, they may also create difficulties because of the incompatibility and obsolescence of precybernetic economy adjustment skills.

The prospects of a cybernetic industrial state challenge and stimulate the mind and imagination. But, ironically, we may never advance to a state of technological unemployment unless we first find ways to draw into the labor force persons who have already adjusted to permanent unemployment despite the availability of work.

During the 1960's, a different type of unemployment became recognized as a serious social and economic problem, particularly in the large metropolitan areas where, for periods of time, there were more jobs than there were workers willing to fill them. Able-bodied, non-institutionalized men in the prime working ages appeared reluctant to seek work on their own initiative and were disinclined to accept work when it was made available through outside intervention. This form of unemployment differed from the "structural unemployment" caused by the exigencies of the general economic situation; it was aggravated by men unwilling to take jobs that work-minded men in the past competed for and fought to hold. The term "motivational" unemployment is used to characterize those jobless persons whose nonparticipation in the labor force was presumably by choice.

"Motivational" unemployment

There is no way to determine accurately how many "motivationally" unemployed there are and any effort to carry out such quantitative research faces large difficulties. The available data on unemployment do not lend themselves to such analysis for at least three reasons: (1) it is difficult to distinguish motivational from nonmotivational reasons for unemployment statistics; (2) many motivationally unemployed have never officially entered the labor force and, therefore, are among the "hidden" unemployed; (3) there are no reliable means of monitoring the psychological factors that distinguish motivational from other forms of unemployment.

Nevertheless, enough is known from other sources of information to safely conclude that motivational barriers constitute a major reason for unemployment and were possibly the major cause for the employment problems during the late 1960's. One indication of their significance is the Automation Commission's somewhat paradoxical concern with gross unemployment, particularly among young people, during periods of economic expansion and labor shortage--forms of unemployment for which automation could not itself be the cause. (Report of the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966, Vol. 1, pp. 31.)

The major investment of Federal and local funds in manpower training programs to increase the employability and long-term productivity of the "hard-to-employ" is a further indication of the importance of noneconomic factors in unemployment. In Federal funds alone, approximately $700,000,000 (Manpower Report, also The Nation's Manpower Program, National Manpower Policy Task Force, January 7, 1968) were spent each year on NYC, OJT, and similar programs. While much of these funds went to provide actual skill training, many of the resources of these programs were devoted directly or indirectly to special conselling to "remotivate" the trainee by verbal persuasion and monetary inducements, or to "resocialize" him by removing him from his own community to a setting guided by an entirely different set of values and expectancies. However, the reduction in unemployment attributable to the direct effects of these federal manpower programs was less than desirable, thus underscoring the difficulty of remedying these problems.

Finally, the fact that the overall patterns of employment did not improve during periods of labor shortage and record-breaking economic expansion for all segments of the population is a further confirmation of the significance of non-economic factors in unemployment. Negroes, and Negro youths in particular, did not benefit as much as the white majority from a "full employment" economy. During the period shortly after World War II, the ratio of unemployed white to nonwhite (98% Negro) was approximately 1:1.6; in more recent years this ratio has remained consistently above 1:2 (Manpower Report, 1966, p. 166, Table A-11; 1967, p. 214, Table A-11). Certainly segregation and job discrimination have been factors which hold back the growth of the Negro labor force and more has to be done to remove these barriers. But, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that education and job opportunity have increased greatly for the Negro since World War II; yet, the pattern of Negro employment has not come in closer conformity with the white. All of this suggests that what has become known as "motivational" unemployment constitutes a serious problem, that it is substantially greater among the young, and is more prevalent among Negroes than among whites.

A large number of motivationally unemployed persons would be a happy occurrence if, indeed, it were true that full automation were just around the corner. They would experience no special problems in adjusting to the requirements of compulsory nonemployment and could serve as adjustment consellors to those work-minded persons who remained psychologically bound to outdated habits. But, the era of full automation is neither right around the corner nor discernable in the foreseeable future. Consequently, for some time to come the presence of large numbers of persons who are "motivationally" unable or unwilling to hold jobs will constitute a major problem for the nation in general, and manpower planners in particular, for a number of reasons:

1. The successive waves of poor immigrants arriving in this country

in search for work have ended. Moreover, there are no other large and untapped labor sources of men available to meet manpower needs during periods of economic expansion and growth. Put simply, the productivity level of the nation will, to a large measure, depend upon how successful we are in utilizing these potential workers who remain unemployed although jobs go unfilled. Thus, unless this residual labor source is drawn into the labor force and is productive, the limit for growth and expansion--barring any great technological breakthrough--will not exceed that possible during the decade of the 1960's.

2. The consequences of motivational unemployment are more serious than those associated with unemployment caused by job scarcity. While discomforting and often causing severe economic and personal adjustments for the individual worker and his family, the stresses of a factory layoff are temporary. Once the economy begins rolling again, life for the worker's family can return to normal. But among the motivationally unemployed, these stresses and strains are permanent conditions of life for them and their dependents. They also produce permanent strains on the welfare and related social service agencies that must help provide for basic, long-term economic and social needs with no guarantee that the costs of such outside help will be paid back by the productive contribution of these potential workers to the economy.

3. In the main, traditional unemployment reflects stages of the business cycle, but motivational unemployment has a deeper significance. It reflects a serious breakdown in the forces that traditionally bind

men to conventional employment. Toil, for these people may have lost its importance as the "prime mover"--it no longer has viability for improving their social and economic position in society. More than wasted opportunity and the loss of human resources, it may imply a serious estrangement or disaffection from the traditional means-ends matching activities which, to a very large degree, constitute the woof and warp of social and economic life as we have known it in this country. In short, the presence of large numbers of motivationally unemployed suggests that fundamental social changes have taken place and that basic beliefs, which in the past could be depended upon to bridge individuals to the larger community, are no longer effective for that purpose. Thus, the motivationally unemployed must be taken seriously, and cannot be dismissed as a marginal or temporary phenomenon, regardless of the state of the economy.

4. Motivational unemployment is extremely difficult to remedy. Neither the manipulation of external forces nor the application of intervention procedures based entirely upon rational or utilitarian models of man are likely to succeed in reducing the problems. Economic changes in the society affect the visibility, not the nature or accessibility of the problem. When there is job scarcity, the motivationally unemployed are indistinguishable from the nonvoluntary unemployed and therefore go unnoticed. On the other hand, when jobs are plentiful, they gain high public visibility because they are a drag on the economy and the personal and social significance of the problems they present

are ignored. Simplifying job requirements, adjusting wages, increasing on-the-job training or even allowing quality standards to decline have not made a great deal of difference. Moreover, as already mentioned, efforts to deal directly with attitudinal and motivational forces through counselling and related techniques have been less than satisfactory.

Competing competencies and unemployment

This report examines unemployment among inner-city youths based on data from two social intervention programs designed to improve their chances for success in the conventional sense. A theory of "competing competencies" is presented to account for chronic unemployment, particularly among some of these more talented youths. The theory maintains that preexistent competencies are sometimes incompatible with and hamper the acquisition of skills necessary for satisfactory adjustment to the employment setting.

Briefly what distinguishes this view from the more typical explanation of "motivational" forces in unemployment is the stress on skills--particularly how already established competencies in the repertoire of behavior may exert a thwarting interference upon the acquisition of new skills--and the intrinsic connection between skill activities and motivation. Central to the theory of competing competencies is the conviction that people are motivated to do things they do best--that a competent self-image is something which we are motivated to achieve and to maintain. The theory holds that we are motivated to: (a) maintain pre-established competencies, and the present level of competency they represent, (b) enhance ones position in society through the execution of these already established competencies rather than to acquire new competencies, (c) avoid prolonged commitment to activities that threaten our sense of competency, and, (d) reestablish ones sense of competency level when it has been lowered. Postulated here is an inseparability between skills and motivation (i.e., competency utilization as a "drive") which implies something crucial to predicting future job success; namely, knowledge of a person's already existent skills may be more important to predicting future behavior than information of a motivational nature, e.g., desire, interests, attitudes, goals, expectancies, and incentives. Yet traditionally, manpower planners, personnel administrators, and policy makers do not consider nonwork related skills as predictors of employability, and focus instead on job related variables with more obvious face validity.

This position may seem at variance with conventional wisdom. Put concisely, it argues that the major barrier to successful employment for many "hard-to-employ" youths is not because they are unmotivated and unskilled. By contrast, they are highly motivated and highly skilled (a) they are motivated to do the things they can do best, and (b) these activities in which they have the highest level of proficiency are related negatively to job success. If this position is correct, it means that their inadaptability to employment may be best understood as the consequence of successful habituation to their socialization community or to subcultural settings within that community.

The major purpose of this report is to provide conceptual clarification and expansion of this view of motivational unemployment and its supporting evidence.

Our purpose, then, will not be to attempt a comprehensive explanation of the hard-to-employ or even to explore reasons for what have been "motivational" factors in unemployment. Undoubtedly many factors go together to produce employability and these noneconomic factors probably differ from situation to situation and person to person. Our purpose is much more limited; namely, to identify a group of hard-to-employ youths whose inadaptability to employment we feel can be traced to the negative interference of previously established skills on job behavior. While the percentage of hard-to-employ youths to whom this explanation applies may be relatively small, they represent a sizable fraction of the more talented and the more intelligent.

Overview

Chapter II presents the theoretical position in detail and contains an illustrative case history example. It also discusses some direct implication for employment. It, more than any other chapter in the report, provides a rounded picture of the major issues and is recommended for those with only limited reading time.

Chapter III is a detailed and, at times, necessarily technical discussion of the supporting empirical data. Additional difficulty arises because this support rests largely upon a convergence or "triangulation" of indirect, but related data from various sources.

Chapter IV is primarily concerned with the development of "non-standard" skills during socialization that may result in competencies that will impede conventional adjustment later in life. The chapter is largely expository in nature--an attempt to explain how and why competing competencies develop.

In this chapter one would have expected to find a discussion built around traditional variables associated with subcultural work values, socialization, personal characteristics of the individual, expectancies, and the like. But, a different contextual property of the "environment" is stressed here, namely, the activities that one is free to participate in during socialization. Not family, not physical living conditions, not intrapsychic factors, not even "motivation," but, activities, particularly those that offer opportunity to learn the critical skills necessary for personal and social adjustment in the socialization community.

It may well be that, in the final analysis, the major significance of this report will be the conceptualization of the "activity environment," the way it differs from the usual variety of geographic behavioral space conceptions of external influences, and the emphasis given to its consequerces for adult adjustment.

Chapter V contains a detailed and somewhat abstract elaboration of the main theoretical components. It concludes with a section on practical complications, derived largely from the earlier sections of the chapter. These, along with the more obvious implications presented in Chapter II, are focused on employment and intervention.

Chapter II

Competing Competencies: An Illustrative Case History

We have done a fairly good job in recent years of rediscovering the poor. Our new knowledge, however, is largely demographic in nature. We know more than before about how many poor there are and where they are located. We have not, however, done as good a job of getting to know what the poor are like as individuals; nor have we learned much about the forces that prevent them from improving their position in society. This situation is in some ways more serious than letting them go unrecognized because, in the absence of tested knowledge on the poor and the dynamics of poverty, we have created invalid explanations to fit the biases embedded in the culture.

This is particularly so with respect to the abilities, skills, and motivation of the poor. For example, we certainly do not view the poor, particularly the nonemployed poor, as competent; and, in fact, it is largely on the basis of belief in their personal incompetence that we publicly rationalize and justify their low social and economic position in society. Such a view of the poor is not entirely erroneous. Certainly there must be more incompetent poor than incompetent rich, but I suspect that there is far more competence among the poor than most outsiders are prepared to believe; and, further, it is highly probable that the relationship between competency and socio-economic mobility is not as simple a matter as the predominant cultural myths about hard work and social mobility would have us believe.

Having now researched urban youths, particularly ghetto youths, for over the past ten years one of the main conclusions I have reached pertains to the resourcefulness, talent, and ingenuity they demonstrate in their effort to survive physically and to achieve a socially valued identity considering the exigencies of their day-to-day lives.

To merely point out that people can adapt to trying circumstances tells us nothing new. Man has spent most of his time on this planet enduring and making the most of limited and stressful external conditions. But present-day urban youths from poverty ridden, inner-city areas have done more than to merely develop an indigenous life style that allows them to adapt and endure. They have managed to carve out an identity for themselves based largely upon the mastery of skills--skills that allow them to survive physically, skills that allow them to achieve social sufficiency, skills that allow them to fill the out-of-school, out-of-work time with interesting and rewarding activities; skills that help overcome the stress of boredom; skills that protect them from outsiders; skills that allow them to be competent and to feel competent vis-a-vis an outside world that continually tells them that they are incompetent and failures, socially and economically, because of their incompetence.

A second observation derived from my research-action experience concerns the limited, almost negligible, impact of social change programs designed to benefit these youths. If, as suggested above, these youths are in fact capable and talented, then it would be expected that programs which involve employability, counselling, and training should facilitate their adjustment to the requirements of the larger community. But despite the personal capabilities of the youths as evidenced by the skills they exhibit in coping with their situation, and despite the well meaning and devoted workers that staff large-scale social intervention programs designed to aid these youths to achieve conventional success, they somehow do not acquire or perform the appropriate new behaviors required for such success--behaviors which, by comparison with their informal street skills, would have to be considered as relatively simple.

If these observations on competency and response to helping efforts among inner-city youths are correct, then we are left with an overall impression that is ironic and paradoxical--capable youths who show unusual skill in making the most out of very limited conditions appear unable or unwilling to meet the relatively simple requirements for conventional success--requirements that, at least on the surface, appear to necessitate far less by way of ability than those required to survive and to thrive in the street culture of their home community. This is most strikingly observed at the level of the individual; time after time, those youths with the largest repertoire of "street" competencies were less likely to succeed in mainstream cultural economic pursuits than those with fewer and less well developed street competencies...with or without the help of social intervention programs.

Why do they not master conventional skills as successfully as they master the street skills? The position taken here is that there is something antithetical between these two sets of skills; i.e., a basic incompatibility or interference between preestablished "nonstandard" competencies and the later acquisition of "standard" competencies required for conventional adjustment. One purpose of this report is to explain and provide support for this argument.

Youth unemployment and intervention

This report derives out of concern for the future of inner-city youths, particularly those who were the targets of two large-scale, meliorative intervention efforts during the 1960's--the Chicago Youth Development Project--CYDP (Mattick and Caplan, 1964) and JOBS 1 (Gurin, 1968). These innovative programs like many similar programs, carried out by devoted and intelligent action workers, did little to help these youths at a crucial pivotal point in their lives--during the transition from youth to young adulthood. The greatest difficulties of the youths who were the targets of these programs arose from their failure to adjust to the world of conventional work. For them, even with benefit of special manpower programs, satisfactory work adjustment seemed to be an impossibility.

Yet, these youths were lacking in neither ability nor mental maturity, they were at the very peak of their physical power and intellectual capacity. If we were to use "street" skills as a criteria to assess their ability, they could be considered capable and "successful" and well-integrated young men, albeit unemployed and unsuccessful from a conventional white middle class mainstream American perspective. They were capable in ways that may be nonobvious to outsiders because their talent has been narrowed into the one comfortable groove available to them; namely, the activity and skill opportunities made possible by the local street culture. These skills, however, go unrecognized, and unrewarded in the world of conventional employment.

This is not to say that these same youths were not disinterested in employment; they often went to surprising lengths to find and hold a job. But, something would always go wrong and they would soon find themselves back on the streets, unemployed and without much hope for success in the conventional sense, seemingly condemned to a life of underemployment, or unemployment.

High school counselors and the state employment agencies quickly recognized that providing them with job information on employment opportunities was inadequate as a means to increase their level of job holding. Their type of nonemployment was difficult to reduce through routine procedures because the problem appeared rooted in personal motivation rather than in a lack of job opportunity information or a shortage of jobs. The unemployment of these youths differed from the more familiar "unemployment" caused by the exigencies of the general economic situation; or, "structural" arising from a mismatch of worker skills and job requirement skills such as that which occurs during periods of technological change. It appeared and was widely assumed that this kind of unemployment problem arose because these youths were unwilling to take jobs that work-minded men in the past competed for and fought to hold on to. Such jobless persons were often labelled "voluntary unemployed," "motivational unemployable," or similar terms that carried with them the connotation that nonparticipation in the labor force was by choice.

Thus, in the absence of clear economic reasons for unemployment, systemic or personal, it was generally felt that non-economic factors were the major reason for unemployment among inner-city youths at that time. Individual-centered rather than external factors were seen responsible for such unemployment because conventional wisdom, derived largely from belief in the American occupational mobility ethic, led to the view that (1) the unemployed should prefer employment to unemployment; and (2) that those entering the labor force for the first time should exhibit a special effort to make the most of the employment opportunities available to them. The root issue was presumed to lie within the individual and not in the macroeconomic or other forces external to the person.

Even though this definition of the problem may seem to draw too sharp a distinction between person- and environment-centered "causes," there seemed little reason to dispute this view, for these youths, the forces that traditionally could be relied upon to bind men to conventional employment failed. Toil, for them, appeared to have lost its importance as the "primary mover"--the main avenue for improving social and economic position in society. In addition there was reason to show special concern over this state of affairs. The wasted opportunity represented by unfilled jobs and the loss of human resources, represented by unemployed but capable young men, implied a serious estrangement or disaffection from the traditional means-ends matching activities (i.e., employment as an income acquisition and social mobility activity), which, to a very large degree fasten individuals to the primary social, economic, and cultural institutions that derive their support from such compliance. The presence of large numbers of these motivationally unemployed youths suggested that fundamental social changes may have taken place in that the basic belief in the work ethic as a moral and social imperative could not be taken for granted. This belief, which in the past could be depended upon to bridge individuals to the wider community, was no longer effective for that purpose. In recognition of these broader social issues, as well, of course, as the economic issues, a number of large-scale, federally funded job development projects were launched to facilitate employment among such youths.

Despite such efforts, however, most of these youths failed repeatedly in their efforts to obtain and hold a job. The youths themselves were at a loss to explain their behavior. They found their "motivational" difficulties as problematic and difficult to comprehend as did those professional outsiders who, like me, were there to study and "help" them. Our purpose here will be to offer an explanation of these events--an explanation which runs counter to many of our commonsense assumptions, but which, nonetheless, makes sense in terms of the available evidence.

Competing competencies

The inability of these youths to adapt to employment presents a problem which does not fit neatly into standard theories on motivation and work. From the standpoint of a rational economic theory of behavior, the actions of the motivationally unemployed make even less sense. Yet, it is not merely random events that determine who adjusts or does not adjust to employment. The discussion to follow presents an overview of an explanation for the type of unemployment discussed in detail in later sections of this report. It may best be described as a theory of "competing competencies" because of the emphasis given to the interference of two types of competencies: (1) pre-established competencies (primarily skills critical to adjustment in the socialization setting); and (2) competencies to settings outside of the socialization community--competencies necessary for successful adjustment particularly with respect to those skills necessary for financially gainful employment in the conventional labor market.

This position may appear to be at variance with conventional wisdom. It argues that one main reason for nonemployment among inner-city youths derives from the fact that work competencies are not autonomous and independent of competencies in nonwork activities. More specifically, it argues that the major difficulty of a sizeable number of "hard-to-employ" youths is not because they are unmotivated and unskilled; but rather, because they are highly motivated and highly skilled: They are motivated, however, to do the things they can do best; but those activities in which they have the highest level of proficiency, i.e., "street competencies," are related negatively to and are incompatible with the skill requirements for job success. If this position is correct, it means that the inadaptability to the requirements of successful employment may be best understood as the consequence of successful habituation to their socialization community or to subcultural settings within that community.

The incapacity to adapt: an illustrative case

It is sometimes possible to find a single case that isolates and brings to life the system, the major variables, and key issues. The experience of "Bill," an 18 year old black youth, may serve such a purpose here by helping to convey the meaning and significance of competing competencies and its role in unemployment among certain youths.

I came to know Bill because he worked part-time assisting the CYDP research team. A good deal of our research data came from interview surveys in ghetto areas. Securing statistically reliable samples of young-adult Negro youths is very difficult, and to assist our interviewers we hired "Indigenous anchor men" in sampling neighborhoods to provide a legitimate entree for the interviewer and, in a variety of other ways, help to avoid the heavy "search" costs normally associated with such research operations. These persons, like Bill, had to be familiar with their neighborhoods and the people in it. Equally important, they had to be capable of exerting the social influence necessary to persuade hard-to-find respondents of the importance of their cooperation.

Bill dropped out of school in the tenth grade and, but for temporary employment at menial jobs, had been unemployed for almost three years despite the efforts of neighborhood youth workers and state employment counsellors to place him on available jobs. He was informed about JOBS by a CYDP street worker and decided to enroll. Shortly after his enrollment in the program I observed him participating in an audio-linqual "speech improvement" activity designed to improve pronounciation by the substitution of standard English sounds for nonstandard or ghetto English dialect. Bill sat before a tape deck, pressed a button, and a voice in perfect standard English pronounced "ask." He pressed another button and recorded his own effort to pronounce "ask." After that a third button was pressed and the machine replayed the precorded "ask" followed by Bill's version so that the comparison could be made. Bill's task in this Pygmalion training seemed simple enough. He had to pronounce "ask" so that it matched the prerecorded version. Once that was accomplished he was to go on to master other prerecorded words such as "physician," "the," etc. But, simple as it might have seemed to the outsider, I watched Bill repeatedly try to pronounce "ask" in "standard" dialect and fail each time. He continually pronounced it as "ax."

After two weeks in the JOBS program Bill informed his counsellor that he wanted to withdraw. He also expressed a willingness to try a job placement if one were available. A job was found. He worked for three days as a cleanup man in a large cafeteria before being fired. To quote the employer, he was fired for "...putting the wrong soap into the dishwashing machine." The employer also reported that he believed that Bill was not really interested in work and that, in his view, the dishwasher incident simply illustrated the kinds of costly errors that ensue when unmotivated persons such as Bill are hired--they are able, but not interested enough in holding a job to keep their mind on the few simple tasks they are required to perform.

A month passed from the time Bill left the project before I saw him again. He was back on the street again, wearing a Norfolk jacket, "jiving," and "rapping," on a corner with his "running mates." I knew that Bill wanted a good job and asked why he had dropped out? He said he had left the JOBS project because they treated him as if he were "nothing." Colorful ideomatic expressions involving one's first degree maternal relations conveyed his dissatisfaction with the project and those who ran it; he could hardly have been considered ineloquent or deficient in the expressive sphere, despite the project's negative evaluation of his ability to handle language. One of his friends was moved to call Bill "a signifying monkey," and suggested that Bill's comments be taped for the project's "language machine." One could imagine the counsellor struggling with "muth-ah" or "shee-it."

Our main interest here is not to discuss why a single individual, Bill, is difficult to assimilate into the labor force, but to illustrate by way of a single case a more general occurrence. It is our contention here that the factors that operated to limit Bill's employability and impeded intervention efforts designed to improve his employability, were also responsible for the inadaptability of many other youths to the requirements for successful employment; particularly those who apply their talents and skills learned during the socialization process--in the case of Bill and others like him, they represent the instrumental and expressive skills a young man needs to master if he is to be competent and thrive in the social and economic milieu of ghetto life. To such youths these skills are a way of life and constitute the basis for establishing one's identity. Our purpose, then, is to use Bill's experience to outline and illustrate the conflicting competency notion and some of its more basic components. Empirical proof to substantiate these views,and the generalizability of this simple case will be presented later.

Bill's repertoire of nonstandard skills

Skills in nonstandard (the JOBS projects euphemism for substandard) English, e.g., verbal games, storytelling, "putting down," were not the only "nonstandard" skills possessed by Bill. He possessed nonstandard skills in other activity areas as well. He was the leader of the "Gladiators," a gang with about ten core members and approximately forty fringe members of unquestioned loyalty and commitment to Bill. He also possessed a variety of income acquisitions skills in the irregular, but not necessarily illegal, economy. When he or his group needed cash, Bill always knew a "hustle," or he could invent a more imaginative and less risky one than suggested by others. He was "alley smart." He served as an information broker to his peers, because he knew best how to survive in a community where one's identity and worth were frequently determined by what happens in the street.

Bill's combined talents are perhaps best illustrated by an event that occurred several months after he left JOBS. He and several friends were "hanging" on their corner, out of money, and unemployed when informed that a gang member had been accidently killed while playing with a gun. To make matters worse, the dead member left a young wife and a six month old baby. No funds had been left either to help the wife or to even provide a decent burial. Within half an hour after learning of the death, Bill mobilized the gang and, by the time of the funeral two days later, they provided for the cost of a casket, flowers, a first rate funeral, and in addition, seven hundred dollars in cash for the widow. In two and one half days, these youths, who from the point of view of the labor market, were "unskilled" and "motivationally" unemployable, had accumulated over $1,500 through a variety of ingenious ways--all unconventional, some illegal but not seriously illegal. Two hours after that funeral, Bill and his friends were again hanging on the corner--broke and unemployed.

Although the tracing of income acquisition activities from the time the Gladiators were informed of the shooting until the time they returned to their corner after the funeral would make interesting reading, it will not be reported in detail here. However, Bill's skills as exemplified in these activities are worth noting. He showed great ability to plan, mobilize his limited resources, and to coordinate the Gladiators' drive to get the most money with the least risk in the shortest time. All things considered, it was quite an achievement; Bill, showing all the skills of cunning commando leader attacking the last bastion of free enterprise--demonstrating intelligence and ingenuity that would have undoubtedly been admired by the inventor, manufacturer, and sales force of the automatic dishwasher which he failed to load properly. Further, it should be mentioned that these income producing activities themselves were not the mister "fix-it" or other low-level skill, self-made work. Yet, while the practical means employed for getting fast money lay outside legal formalities, no one was strong armed, no one was asked to give money out of a sense of charity, nor was the money borrowed. By and large, Bill was able to get the necessary money through entrepreneurial know-how, persuasion, and knowledge of everything that went on in the community; and, in addition, because he was fast thinking and glib. In short, Bill understood and knew how to operate the quasi-legal economy that can be found in the inner-city areas of any large city. Had he been inclined to use such skills for his own benefit, he could have made a fine life for himself through such hustles.

Bill serves as an exemplar of a person who, on the one hand, is obviously talented and capable if evaluated against the backdrop of his own upbringing; but, who, on the other hand, is nevertheless incompetent from the standpoint of the larger community, and unable to behave in the few simple ways required for satisfactory adjustment to employment--even with outside help such as that provided by JOBS and the CYDP. The question to be addressed now is, "Why?" Let us now turn to the examination of some possible answers.

Competency as a factor in unemployment

In the ghetto milieu Bill's established competencies worked for him in important ways: one, they allowed him to cope successfully with the day to day problems within the ghetto community; two, the very mastering of these difficult skills (and the option to exercise them) provided important intrinsic rewards; three, he enjoyed and valued routine social reputation built around him and demonstrated ability to perform these street skills with a high degree of proficiency. In short, they helped him survive, they were important to his social sufficiency, and they provided intrinsic gratification. By contrast, in the work setting, these same skills had no positive value, thus he experienced repeated failure and was viewed as an incompetent. Let us examine more closely this incongruency between these preestablished competencies and the skills necessary for reward in the employment setting with a view to understanding some of the motivational conflict and frustrations that it produces.

Status incongruency. Perhaps the most obvious relation between Bill's pre-established competencies and his employment failure was the marked contrast produced between his competency status (and the self-esteem associated with it) in the ghetto setting *vis a vis* competency status in the employment setting.

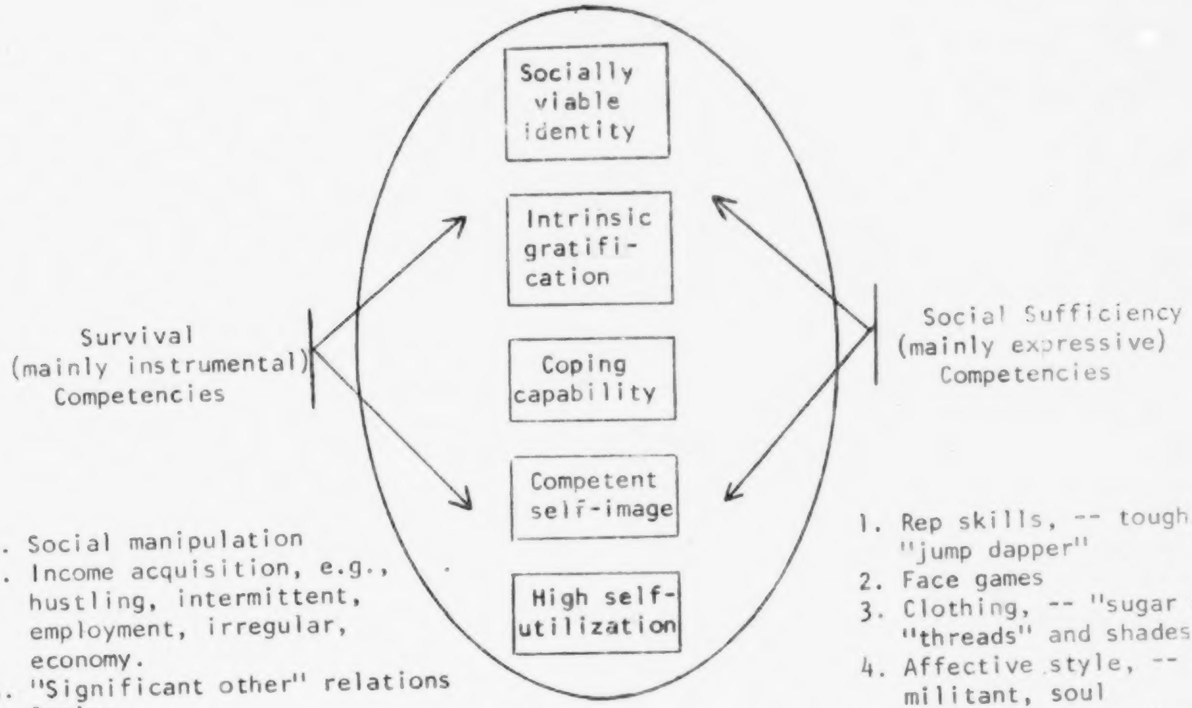
From the standpoint of his peers, and the ghetto community in general, Bill was a man "on the make." He was highly skilled, inventive, well integrated into the community and capable of extraordinary achievements--albeit, unemployed.

From his own point of view, he was successful and enjoyed his life... having rarely experienced failure. His survival competencies grew out of straightforward reactions to the realities of his immediate condition and he was proud of them. He had faith in his potential to act competently and knew how to implement that potential especially at times of crisis. He was "his own man;" no one told him (or needed to tell him) what to do or how to do it. He had ownership of his own behavior, and in psychological terms, autonomous control over his own reinforcement. In short, he applied his talents to the development of coping skills necessary for physical survival and social sufficiency in the ghetto milieu and had succeeded superbly in those accomplishments by the standards of that social environment.

Figure 1 illustrates Bill's identity based upon ghetto-based competencies. Under "survival competencies" are listed those skills in which Bill was competent, that were useful for survival in terms of those things most necessary or instrumental for physical wellbeing. Within the ghetto milieu, Bill had at least four such competencies: (1) social manipulation--he was glib and ingratiating and could "charm" people into giving him what he needed; (2) income acquisition, as already indicated--he knew how to play the irregular economy when necessary; (3) "significant other" relations--Bill knew the "important" people in the community and was liked by them; thus more so than most others in the community, he knew who to go to and how best to approach local people who could be helpful in a crisis situation; and, (4) gaming--if necessary, he knew how to dupe others for personal gain, he could have made a good confidence man (gaming is usually employed only on outsiders, not those persons routinely in the community).

On the right hand side of the figure are a list of social sufficiency competencies--skills that allow a person to be favorably regarded in his community, skills that provide social status. Twelve such skills in which

Identity System


Socially viable identity
Intrinsic gratification
Coping capability
Competent self-image
High self-utilization
Survival (mainly instrumental) Competencies
Social Sufficiency (mainly expressive) Competencies

1. Social manipulation
2. Income acquisition, e.g., hustling, intermittent, employment, irregular, economy.
3. "Significant other" relations
4. Gaming

1. Rep skills, -- tough, cool, "jump dapper"
2. Face games
3. Clothing, -- "sugar sharp," "threads" and shades
4. Affective style, -- strut, militant, soul
5. Verbal games -- signifying, dozens, mammy rapping.
6. Language, -- argot, jaw jacking, rapping, capping.
7. Sexual conquests, -- stud
8. Hip
9. Fighting, -- Ghengis Khan (Karate)-- Mock Battles
10. Basketball
11. Innovativeness
12. "Psyching out" skills

Figure 1. Identity System Based Bill's Repertoire of Established Competencies.

Bill was competent are listed. Briefly,(1) Rep skills: he knew how to develop and give visability to personal traits that were admired--he had a reputation for being outstanding in the "focal concerns" of the ghetto society, he was tough, cool, "jump dapper" (quick on his toes), a ladies man, and so on. (2) Face games: he knew how to defend and enhance his own reputation, i.e., save face, while putting down or demeaning the accomplishments of competitors. (3) Clothing: he had an outstanding sense of dress. (4) Affective style: he was characteristically expressive in ways that appealed to others. He could adapt a number of postures with skill, he could strut, be mean, etc. (5) Verbal games: the ability to compete in verbal competition and to come out ahead in games such as signifying, mammy rapping, the "dozens;" these are important to social status, and Bill was a master at such matters. (6) Language: quite apart from competive games, Bill could tell stories, argue, etc. well. (7) Sexual conquests: he was liked by the girls, in fact the Gladiators had a female auxilliary called the Glad Ladies made up almost entirely of his admirers. (8) Hip: he was up on the newest of everything. (9) Fighting: Bill was a good fighter; he studied Karate at the local YMCA (gang members continuously engage in mock battles among themselves and with members of other groups as well. Bill was superb in this regard (real fights rarely occur, even between members of different "fighting" gangs). (10) Basketball: Bill was a good athlete. (11) Innovativeness: he was quick to see novel and unorthodox solutions and activities. (12) "Psyching out" skills: Bill could "size-up" and assess people in psychological terms.

The skills listed in Figure 1 by no means exhaust the competencies typically found among youths in ghetto communities. Moreover, skills--by and large "nonstandard competencies"--differ from community to community. For example, in ghetto areas, such as that in which Bill lived, youths typically develop means to turn on fire hydrants to cool off during the summer. However, in an Italian inner-city area immediately to the east, "cooling off" is of minor importance compared to other activities engaged in once the hydrants are turned on. Young children put sheets of cardboard under them or use wooden crates to surf along the gutter propelled by the stream of water. Others compete to see who can withstand the full force of the spray for the longest time at a fixed distance, or by riding bikes toward the hydrant at full spray. Sometimes they compete in feats of strength by attempting to cap the hydrant with the water at full force. Finally, there are any number of target and distance games. In all there are possibly twenty or thirty games (as well as various forms of ethnographic harassment), each requiring skill, that could be identified in conjunction with the turning on of the hydrants in Italian neighborhoods, but very few in adjacent black neighborhoods.

Our point here is that (1) there is opportunity to develop "nonstandard" competencies and (2) such competencies take on important meaning for the individuals involved. One could go so far as to argue that, indeed, to a large extent we are what we do.

Bill's activities are portrayed in Figure 1 as making-up an identity system. They provide him with: (1) a socially viable identity--he is viewed favorably by others in the community because he can perform a large number of important activities competently; (2) intrinsic gratification--not only can he perform them competently, but he enjoys the activities in their own right, quite apart from their other values; (3) coping capability--they were instrumentally important for both survival and expressive purposes; (4) competent self image--they provided him with a very positive feeling of self evaluation; and (5) they offered him opportunity to fully utilize his potentials.

In the JOBS environment, Bill was not regarded well by those whose opinions were important to his future. The JOBS staff took another view of his capacities; they saw him as unmotivated, unskilled, and otherwise ineffective. He had no "marketable" skills, and was "deficient in the verbal and expressive sphere." Almost all of their attempts to influence or modify his behaviors had failed. The counsellors were in fact relieved to see him go because, with a word or two at the right time, Bill could too easily control the informal counselling group discussion and deprive them of that vital "teachable moment" they worked hard to set up. His "basic education" teachers were frustrated by his "passive aggressive" posture, exemplified by the never changing "poker face" in person-to-person learning situations.

Figure 2 illustrates Bill's competencies in relation to the employment setting. By contrast to Figure 1, the number of skills are less. While he may have a large number of ghetto-relevant survival skills, he was unable to demonstrate competency in skills necessary for satisfactory adjustment in the employment setting. The poker-face approach was a defense which worked well to protect his ego and to telegraph his hostility to the JOBS staff and employer. It protected him psychologically, but did not really aid him in overcoming the obstacle to successful employment. In consequence of the lack of survival and social sufficiency competencies, the self image is one of

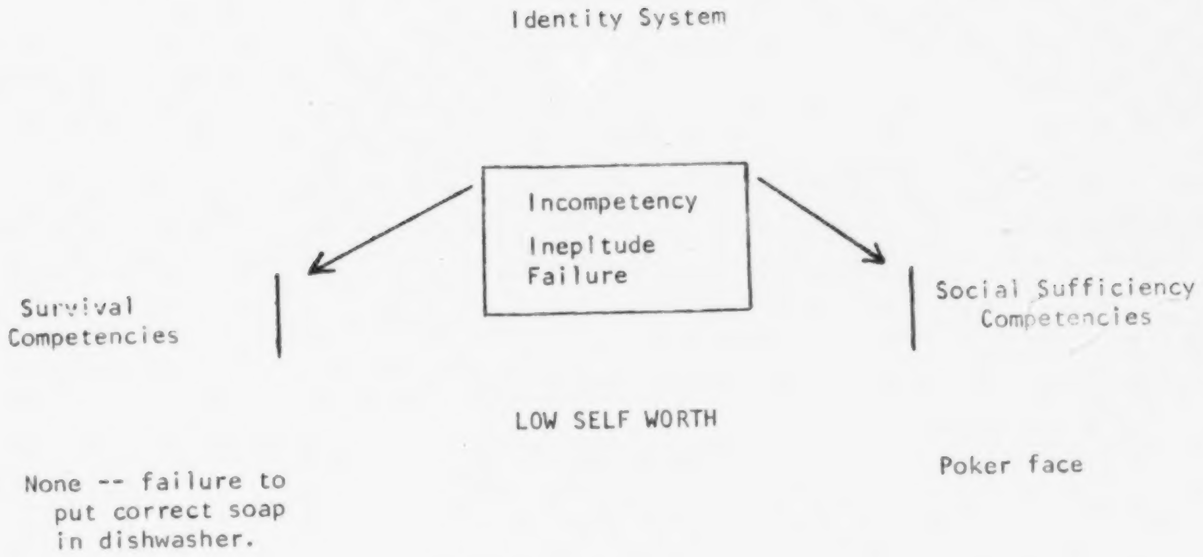

Identity System
Incompetency
Ineptitude
Failure
Survival Competencies
Social Sufficiency Competencies
LOW SELF WORTH
None -- failure to put correct soap in dishwasher.
Poker face

Figure 2. Bill's Identity System in the Employment Setting.

failure and ineptitude in that (i.e., employment) setting. In contrast to Figure 1, his competencies, or lack of them, result in low self-worth, low survival success, no intrinsic gain, no social approval, and virtually no objective evidence of self utilization.

Despite its difficulties with Bill, the staff was baffled by his failure to respond favorably to the program. He had scored higher on non-verbal, "culture-free" intelligence measures than most enrollees who responded more favorably to the program efforts. Many with less ability had remained in the program and were adjusting satisfactorily. Thus it appeared that Bill was capable but disinclined to do the things the program staff deemed necessary for successful job placement. In short, he was not (1) manipulable and (2) he appeared to possess a special disaffinity for "success" with respect to the adoption of those behaviors upon which the success or failure of the program depended. His subsequent failure on the job and the employer's explanation of that failure corroborated the staff's judgment that the failure of JOBS as a facilitative mechanism was Bill's fault, not the program's. Bill was incorrigible.

From the standpoint of his performance in the training program and his job behavior, the JOBS staff and the ex-employer were correct. Quite apart from the accuracy of their diagnosis for his failure, the fact that Bill had performed badly cannot be disputed from the standpoint of job success requirements. But, by knowing a little more about Bill than the JOBS staff or his former employer we can gain better understanding of why he did not perform well in the employment setting--indeed, knowing the number, kind, and amount of skills in nonwork competencies and the personal esteem they afforded him in his socialization community--it would have been unusual for him to have behaved differently.

To a large extent we are what we can do, particularly, what we can do best. Our skill accomplishments make up our identity. and in his socialization community, Bill could do many things and could do those things well. By contrast, in the employment setting, Bill did nothing well: whereas before he was competent, now he was incompetent; whereas before he experienced success, now he experienced failure. The proud identity cherished in Figure 1 was now replaced by the degradated self-image in Figure 2. Stein's observation of a teacher of children from poverty backgrounds illustrates this same narrow culture-bound view of human potential: "...one teacher when asked to rank her children by their readiness to enter first grade put four of her twenty children at the bottom of the list and noted that they were 'mute.' Since this was somewhat unusual, we went back to the teacher to confirm her note. 'Yes,' she said, 'they have not said one word for six months and they don't appear to hear anything I say.' 'Do they ever talk to the other children?' 'Sure,' was her reply. 'They cackle to each other in Spanish all day' (Stein, 1971)."

Bill's competence in the adjustment skills critical for success in the socialization setting had no positive transfer value to the job world, and, therefore, from the point of view of the labor market, he was incompetent. Despite the richness of his repertoire of skills, there are no jobs to reward him to "strut," "rap," etc. Other than in a very exceptional few instances, these are not marketable skills and regardless of how proficient Bill might be in their execution they have no positive job-transfer value for new labor force entrants.

To add insult to injury, the JOBS project (and Bill's employer) treated Bill no differently than those trainees who were either totally incompetent or less competent in ghetto adjustment skills. In the eyes of the program staff, Bill was like everyone else who demonstrated ineptitude in their response to help, i.e., unskilled and lacking in motivation. But, there were two important differences between Bill and trainees who lacked proficiency in Figure 1 type competencies. First, because of the mastery of these skills, Bill had no reason to view himself as an incompetent prior to the JOBS experience. Thus the JOBS project resulted in a drastic lowering of his situational competency level as well as his sense of self-worth; those trainees who never excelled in these street skills suffered no such loss of situational effectiveness or self-esteem loss. Their street competencies never developed to the point of providing a sense of self-competency worth cherishing. Second, Bill could quickly reestablish his former level of self-competency by leaving the project and returning to the ghetto. In fact, dropping out had a double advantage for Bill: It removed him from a situation where his established skills went unrecognized and unrewarded, i.e., withdrawal from a competency-loss stage; and it enabled him to restore his competency by returning to an activity setting that rewarded his competencies. By contrast, those youths with fewer "nonstandard" competencies compared to Bill (i.e., relatively incompetent in ghetto survival skills by comparison to Bill) and equally lacking in job related skills, experienced the project differently. They experienced less of an initial loss in competency level, and had little to gain in terms of self-esteem by dropping out and returning to the streets.

Thus we can speculate at this point that one of the major obstacles to employment among youths with a sizable repertoire of "nonstandard" skills is a dramatic reduction in the adjustment value of skills and the sense of competency they provide when effectively utilized. In Bill's case, this operated in an absolute and relative sense; absolute in terms of the difference in the way he performed and was rewarded in the socialization setting (Figure 1) vis-a-vis the employment setting, and relative in the sense that he was reduced to the status of youths who were less competent or even incompetent in the non-standard skills necessary for survival and social sufficiency in the ghetto subculture.

The presumption here is that when a person who can perform competently in one activity setting finds himself in another activity setting where his potential for competency cannot be actualized, he will be motivated to restore his competency level to its former level. In most cases this will mean returning to an activity setting where pre-established competencies are rewarded (when and where possible) rather than to remain in a setting where he must endure performing incompetently.

Bill expressed displeasure over the status incongruency, i.e., the adjustment value of his competencies in the ghetto vis-a-vis their value in the employment setting. He knew he was a competent person through past experience, but he also knew that in the eyes of the JOBS staff and his employer he was incompetent. Thus, this very dramatic devaluation of his sense of self-worth derived from his repertoire of nonstandard competencies and the extraordinary achievements they made possible. This was very disturbing to him. Thus, to him, leaving the JOBS project was a way to salvage his self-esteem. To have remained in, would have meant to pay a punishing price for "success." Had he remained enrolled he would have been killed psychologically.

This first component of the competing competency theory, i.e., the dramatic deevaluation of self resulting from a change of activity setting among persons with well developed "nonstandard" competencies, produces a shocking loss to ones sense of self value. Once outside of ones established setting it is discomforting to find that the competency-rewards relations to which a person had become accustomed no longer operate in the expected ways; or, to follow the lines of our argument, the skills that brought reward and a valued self-image are no longer of any instrumental value. But, this sudden and discomforting incongruency in the way a person is treated in two different activity settings is only one factor that contributes to adjustment difficulties in the new setting because of previously established competencies.

Intrinsic gratification

A person is motivated to do the things he can do well, especially if the things he does well bring him his greatest rewards. That is, ideal activities are those which provide intrinsic reward, and at the same time, are an important activity among our repertoire of competencies instrumentally valued in terms of the external reward system. Few of us, however, ever master a single skill which, from among our repertoire of competencies, is the highest in both internal and external rewards.

For most of us, our repertoire of competencies, i.e., all the things we can do well, act as both a motivating and a facilitating force. Because of the intrinsic reward gain we are motivated to exercise such skills and these same activities are facilitative in the sense they also are of instrumental importance because they are sufficiently valued by society so as to gain for us the external rewards without which we could not survive. Further, if we have nonstandard competencies with little or no instrumental or facilitative value, they become our hobbies and we relegate them to the status of leisure time activities. Thus, our nonstandard competencies, i.e., skills which are not critical to meeting mainstream economic-cultural adjustment requirements, (1) do not constitute our entire repertoire of competencies, and (2) if exercised they will be irrelevant (not necessarily counter productive to success in our work setting, i.e., they will be tolerated and possibly respected by one's co-workers or employers as in the case of someone who can bowl well.

But, the above is very different from Bill's situation. His competencies are entirely nonstandard, therefore, there is little or no chance for him to get that intrinsic value from employment. There are no entry level jobs that would allow him to integrate his competencies into a job so that it would be rewarding; intrinsically or instrumentally. The activities listed in Figure 1 show Bill as a multidimensional man with an assortment of skills rich in intrinsic value--none of which have any instrumental value in the narrowly defined job adjustment requirements as defined by JOBS or by entry level job requirements. Imagine what kinds of people might find joy in mastering the cleaning of a cafeteria--and then look at Figure 1 and witness the wide variety of activities and the breadth of understanding and the extraordinary ability a person would need to successfully master them--and the sense of competence and worth such mastery might afford. Even Bill's instrumental skills have a high loading on the intrinsic component and if we multiply what he says about hustling by the number of other skills in Figure 1, it is perhaps possible to see what I mean by a motivational tug in the other direction--even though none of these Figure 1 skills could, in the long run provide the economic gain of steady employment as a clean-up man.

> To wheel and deal, that's what we're talking about. Because that's essentially what hustling is, wheeling and dealing.
>
> That's the whole gig, but you have to think about those things and be very clever about it. Don't mean to call myself clever, didn't mean to do that. But...you know, it's almost necessity.
>
> Yet, that's the essential thing in hustling man...you set your own thing and you're clever about it. Not the kind of shoes you wear or the kinds of cars you drive, but knowing how to game up tight and that kind of stuff.
>
> It's a beautiful feeling man when you pull off a hustle, really beautiful.
>
> It's beautiful, I can't explain it, man, it's a feeling, it's just one of those things you can't explain. You know, you're asking something that's hard to explain in any terms, it's so hard to really do it. I just don't know. Everybody can tell you the mechanisms and the procedures, but no one can tell you the feeling.

Implications of competing competencies theory

Conceptual clarification and expansion of this view of motivational unemployment, as well as the supporting evidence, will have to await later discussion. But, even at this early point, some important implications are worth mentioning.

The competing competencies theory postulates that inadaptability to employment, i.e., as expressed by high unemployment and turnover rates, is not derived from a lack of motivation. The problem is one of mixed motives--(1) one motivational force in the direction of work activities, i.e., a positive desire for success in employment and (2) a counter motivational force tugging in the direction of nonwork activities, i.e., a desire to maintain ones established sense of self-competency and continued social reward through the exercise of already existent competencies.

To put it differently, central to the theory of competing competencies is the conviction that people are motivated to do the things they do best--that a competent self-image is something which we are motivated to achieve and to maintain. The theory holds that we are motivated to: (a) preserve and to exercise established competencies, and thereby maintain the sense of "the-self-as-a-competent-person" they afford; (b) maintain and enhance one's position in society through the execution of already established (e.g., familiar and proven) competencies rather than through the acquisition of new competencies; (c) avoid prolonged commitment to activity environments in which established competencies go unrewarded; and (d) reestablish one's sense of competency level when it is threatened or lowered.

Postulated here, then, is an intrinsic inseparability between activities in which a person excells and motivation (i.e., competency utilization as a "drive"). Our thinking and our concept of self are formed by the initial activities we undertake in satisfying our needs to be competent. The implication for predicting and training for job success may be put concisely:

1. Recruitment and selection Knowledge of a person's already existent skills may be more important to predicting future behavior than any other information about him--more important, for example, than his past employment histories, more important than information of a motivational nature, such as desire, interests, attitudes, goals, expectancies, and incentives.

The role of established skills, other than those that match job requirements, do not normally enter into the considerations of manpower policy planners, personnel administrators and others concerned with employee selection and job training. The focus of attention is almost exclusively on job relevant skills such as punctuality, dependability, capacity to learn as measured by standard tests, etc. If the position to be argued here is to correct, then all competencies possessed by an individual must be identified to assess employability, regardless of their apparent relation to specific job requirements; otherwise those preestablished competencies which might greatly influence the acquisition of job relevant skills could go unnoticed.

2. Training Preestablished competing competencies, or at least their negative influence on learning, would have to be effectively neutralized (if possible) before successful adjustment to the work setting could take place, or a job placement may have to be made to allow for the expression, integration, and utilization of these established competencies into the work setting. On the basis of these two implications above, the entire scheme of selection and training procedures may have to be reconsidered for unemployed persons, particularly new entrants to the labor force possessing a sizable repertoire of established competencies.

3. Person-job fit At most, a deemphasis on person-change programs to enhance job development and a search for ways to modify the job market to fit the existing talents would be required. Even if person "change" efforts were possible, the cost of absorbing youths with a large number of non-work related socialization competencies into the labor force may be less than the cost of behavior modification programs, i.e., "undoing" nonjob skills which interfer with the acquisition of job-relevant skills. The practical means to

achieve increased employability of such youths may best be thought of as a problem of resource transformation (altering structural variables in the work setting to utilize already established skills) rather than a problem of resource development (skill training to meet job requirements).

4. Long-range solutions Any long term solution to non-employment may involve the manipulation of the socialization processes--the socialization of "desired" competencies into society. These implications require that we consider issues broader than the economy alone. Because, if efforts are undertaken to make early socialization competencies functually equivalent to job requirements later in life, then such action will, in the long run, also determine what kind of society we will have. A planfully oriented society should, of course, begin with a discussion of the kind of future society that is desirable and then socialize its young in the ways necessary to achieve and maintain that society.

5. The importance of economic needs in relation to other societal needs By catering to the demands of the economy through rewarding only marketable skills, the labor force skill requirements may be seen as serving as a competency validation function for all of society. It rewards only skills which meet the interests of the prevailing economic-cultural establishment. It specifies the means (skills)--end (job goals) relation in a "one-way" manner so that only specific skills become rewarded, those that meet available job requirements. Even if other alternative skills could be utilized to achieve the same end, it is likely that only the designated skills become validated for reward. Thus people must adapt to the specifications of the job, i.e., develop proficiency in skills which have value in the free market place, or suffer rather serious consequences. In short, the labor

force operates as a sort of behavior "cookie cutter" by rewarding people for having some skills (competencies with economic utility) and it punishes those without these skills even though they may have other skills (competencies with social or personal utility, but not economic utility). By doing so, those cultural and early socialization skills with immediate transfer value to the labor force requirements get "stamped in" while other skills represent a very narrow view of a person's capabilities; the society becomes competent along these same narrow and restrictive lines. A rather flagrant illustration of this point comes from Richardson (1968) who describes an "Americanization" festival sponsored by Henry Ford in Detroit during the early 1920's. The festival began within a stage version of a giant melting pot where a large number of East European immigrant men, women, and children dressed in decorative ethnic clothing were dancing and singing in the style of their native country. As the performance continued, those in the great pot began to change from their ethnic costumes to everyday American working class clothing; leaving their tamborines behind, they picked up working tools and marched through a door in the pot to the outside, singing the Star Spangled Banner as they left. At the conclusion of the scene those formerly inside the great pot stood beside it at attention, dressed alike and holding working tools, all singing in salute to the flag and the nation for which it stands. One could imagine the reaction to such a spectacle today...in fact, the resistance that would make this sort of thing impossible today is really the heart of the competing competency theory. We will return to this later in the discussion.

6. Ability and unemployment The competing competencies formulation here is worthy of serious attention because of implications for the

utilization of human resources. If unemployment is highest among those most proficient at the culture of their socialization community, such persons must, of necessity, be among those outstanding in native ability. For them there is an inverse relationship between individual ability and the chance for conventional success. Put simply, inner-city youths who have successfully acquired the relevant and critical competencies necessary for social sufficiency and economic well-being--those best habituated to their immediate environment--are likely to be the more talented. If, however, these competencies interfer with the acquisition of job-relevant skills, then by mastering their culture these youths will have laid the bases for their later inadaptability to the demands of conventional employment. They may be successful within the socialization milieu but, nevertheless, will remain jobless, denied access to mainstream cultural-economic activities, and forever rooted in the values and life-styles of their early socialization community with only the chance for acquiring income through marginal jobs on the irregular economy. Even the best of this kind of "nonstandard" success is not altogether desirable; for even the most talented and successful hustler will tell you that there are more desirable ways to achieve the "sweet" life.

7. Theoretical significance Finally, of more general significance to the social science community, our exploration of this topic holds promise for increasing our understanding of the effects of external influences on human behavior.

The role of the environment as a determinant of man's behavior has been an issue of long-term concern. While its importance was generally recognized by most social scientists, Lewin's B = f (P,E) represented the first systematic formulation of a behavioral theory incorporating both the person and the environment. McCall (1963) and Stern (1968) furthered our understanding of Murray's (1938) need-press scheme by focussing on the personal characteristics of the individual and their relation to different "contextual" properties of the environment. Others, e.g., Barker (1963) and Chapin (1969), have placed less emphasis on person-centered variables, arguing that knowledge of space, time, and location--where a person is, i.e., the geo-behavioral environment--will best enable us to successfully predict his behavior. But, while it is agreed that man, to a large degree, is a similator of his environment, we do not know precisely which environmental factors exert the major influences on behavior, nor do we have adequate explanations of how such influences operate.

This report attempts to conceptualize a schema for taking better account of environmental influences than is customary and to specifically demonstrate the effects of an environmental influence, which, although not as concrete and tangible as those physical and demographic variables routinely considered in this context, may nevertheless be of paramount importance in shaping behavior. Our concern here is with what may be called the "activity" environment and its value as an organizing concept around which to consider external influences on behavior. "Activity" environment is used to denote the presence of opportunities for development of social sufficiency and survival competencies within an individual's socialization community. Our concern here is with the differential consequences of various activity environments for adjustment to mainstream cultural-economic situations outside the socialization community. These findings indicate that knowledge of a person's repertoire of pre-established socialization competencies may enable us to predict more accurately how he will behave than other pieces of information about him.

Recapitulation

Broadly speaking, we are interested in the socialization of competence. We would like to consider how a society can engineer and carry forward the fullest development of the resource potential of its youths. Our immediate practical concern is intervention for improving employability. Broadly speaking, our purpose will not be to attempt a comprehensive explanation of all hard-to-employ, or even to explore all "motivational" factors in unemployment. Undoubtedly many factors go together to reduce employability with the economic factors probably differing from situation to situation and the person-centered factors probably differing from person to person. Our purpose is much more limited; namely, to identify a group of hard-to-employ youths whose inadaptability to employment we feel can be traced to the negative interference of previously established skills. While the percentage of hard-to-employ youths for whom this explanation applies may be relatively small, they represent a sizable fraction of the more talented and the more intelligent, and in that sense are of special significance.

Further, we are concerned with the practical difficulties of successful program intervention. We are less concerned, however, with how to intervene when a person is about to enter the labor market, than in the derivation of early steps, i.e., the socialization of a competent society, that can be taken to avoid later employment problems. As the discussion proceeds it will become evident that this emphasis upon development rather than treatment is more a matter of necessity than personal preference. For, if "employability" does indeed have its roots in the development of socialized competencies among the young, then one has to think broadly and with a view toward long term planning as the only practical solution. Such long term intervention solutions to the problems of motivational unemployment among urban youths have met with only a limited amount of success. We are confronted with a situation in which the practicalist has to think of radical terms--thus, if we are serious about improving the employment potential of these youths we may have no alternative but to start by deciding what kind of society we want and then move from there to provide the "activity environment" and the necessary environmental supports necessary to ensure the development of a competent society along those desired lines. There simply may not be a more "practical" solution.

We are sympathetic of the position of Tapp and Roberts who argue "...we want to emphasize that without any simultaneous change in the social structure these programs are a form of band-aid piecework, inefficient and expensive (p. 48)." But, a diagnosis along these lines of the youths employment problems is more easily reached than a reformulation of the problem to indicate the specific structural changes that have to be made. Until we know more about the cause of the problem and its roots, it is unlikely that we can identify the structural changes likely to produce the desired payoffs in changed attitudes and motivation. The emphasis upon environmental change may simply reflect a shift from one strategy (person change) with a great deal of "face" validity to a second structural change strategy whose "face" validity is derived from the failure of the first. Our purpose here is to provide tested information that can form the operational basis for intervention. Further, there is reason to doubt that "simultaneous" structural changes are any different from other "band-aid" or short term solutions. Undoubtedly, it is possible to modify the labor market so as to maximize the utilization of existing skills and talents by concentrating on how the job can be changed to fit the man rather than the reverse. But the real problem is not how to deal with a mismatch between the man and the job. The real problem is how to socialize competencies into the members of society so that the mismatch does not occur in the first place and that, again, starts with the question of social goals and the nature of the kind of society we find desirable. Simply modifying the job environment to cement present workers to their jobs is only another stop gap solution if not accompanied by more long-term changes in the social structure itself.

Data sources

The data to be discussed in support of the competing competencies notion comes from two large-scale intervention projects with which I was associated, JOBS and CYDP.

JOBS

The JOBS I project was conducted in six separate training centers in Chicago in 1965. (See Gurin, 1968 for a detailed account of the program and the research findings.) The enrollment consisted largely of hard-to-employ youths whose major problems were considered to be motivational in origin. Referrals to the program came from the Illinois State Employment Service and various youth-serving agencies after more routine employment counselling and job placement efforts had failed. The program ran for 52 weeks and as an enticement to remain in the program enrollees were paid $35-50 a week, depending on their sex and marital status. About 95 percent of those enrolled were [illegible] between the ages of 16 and 22. About one-third were female.

CYDP

In addition to my association with the JOBS I project, I directed a research program for a broad-aim youth resocialization project, The Chicago Youth Development Program (CYDP), a five year program of street club work and community organization which ran from 1962 to 1967.

The target population for the CYDP was approximately 5,000 inner-city youths and young adults living within the boundaries of its experimental areas. Throughout the life of the project, data were routinely gathered on many of these youths (a complete description of the CYDP action and research programs can be found in Mattick and Caplan, 1964).

Fortunately. the CYDP staff was in a working relationship with many of the same youths enrolled in JOBS. Approximately 125 of the youths living in the CYDP sampling areas eventually enrolled in the JOBS project. About 25 of these were in close contact with the CYDP street club workers.

Further, data gathering for the CYDP began three years prior to the advent of JOBS and continued until almost two years after its termination. Thus the CYDP data provided a vantage point from which it was possible not only to examine supplementary data on the same youths during the period of their experience in the JOBS project, but it also provided an opportunity to explore the effects of JOBS on its enrollees in relation to their behavior in the open community prior and subsequent to the time of project involvement. Thus the combination of JOBS and CYDP data makes it possible to examine the effects of the job development program from a unique variety of data and time perspectives.

It can be said with confidence that when considered in the aggregate the effects of both the CYDP and JOBS on the lives of these youths were disappointingly small. Undoubtedly, these programs acted as a facilitating force on the lives of some youths but not enough were positively affected to allow for the identification of a sizeable "success" group with isolateable and identifiable characteristics. But even though the data were not originally intended to be used for such a purpose, the availability of this unusual combination of data sources on the behavior of single individuals in a variety of situations through time made it possible to explore for possible reasons the failure of these action programs. While the competing competency theory does not explain all the reasons for their lack of success, it does throw light on a kind of failure with very important implications for future social action; and, more generally, it adds to our knowledge of the socialization process particularly with respect to the identification of key variables in the social environment. Such insights were possible only because there was opportunity to work from the data and time perspectives of both intervention projects.

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Chapter III

Empirical Results

The suspicion that pre-established competencies played an important role in determining the outcome of intervention efforts developed gradually over a period of several years. One reason the idea developed slowly was due to the fact that it resulted from repeated efforts to make sense out of the gradual accumulation of evidence that the outcomes of the CYDP and JOBS projects were contrary to the anticipations of the sponsors and action agents.

On the basis of observations and conversation with workers and contact youths, it was apparent relatively early in the history of CYDP and later JOBS that these projects were not likely to succeed as expected. Not only was it apparent that the action objectives were overly ambitious, but the suspicion grew that the "treatment" inputs were producing negative effects. Thus, very early there was reason to believe that there was something fundamentally wrong with the very assumptions upon which the action programs were based. The programs were designed to help youths in two ways: remotivating them, i.e., increasing their motivation along conventional lines, usually through counselling; and by developing skills by providing them with training opportunities. The prima facie plausability of this analysis of target population needs is great; but when put to a real test, the diagnosis did not appear to lead to successful action practices. The quantifiable "real test" data, however, were not available to confirm these early hunches until several years after the projects were begun.

Another reason the theory developed slowly was due to the nature of the data available for testing alternative explanatory hypotheses. Much of the evidence that led to the competing competencies theory grew out of efforts to understand failure in programs that were launched with success in mind. Thus, to confound the problem of proof even further, the data used here to argue the case for the competing competencies theory and to explain intervention failure were drawn from research efforts originally designed to measure success--not failure.

Had CYDP and JOBS, like similar social action projects, been successful in the achievement of their major goals, then the evaluation measures would have detected the success and would have helped to throw light on the relative efficacy of the different change techniques employed as well. But in the absence of large numbers of successes, such overall evaluations are generally of little value and merely lead to reports containing overwhelming numbers of tables of data that show no significant differences regardless how the data are massaged. In some cases, if the intended effects are not produced, the data may not even receive careful analysis and, perhaps, the final report may never be written. The significance of this for us lies in the fact that while much can be learned from studying failure, success is sought--not failure; and, in consequence, if such programs fail to achieve the objectives they set for themselves, a worthwhile analysis of the reasons for that failure is, at best, (as in the present instance) merely the fortuitous by-product of efforts originally designed to measure and explain the success that was sought but which escaped the action team.

Further, not only were the impact findings negative, but they were baffling as well; the findings could not be readily interpreted or explained on the basis of the meaning of work literature or the more commonly accepted notions about socialization. Thus, a new way of looking at the outcome data was necessary before a meaningful explanation could be achieved, and that took additional time.

Thus, what we have here are bits and pieces of evidence gathered over time, which, when put together, and while not unequivocally informative, appear best accounted for by the competing competencies notion to explain the forces that operated to deny the action practitioners the success they worked so hard to achieve. Our reasoning is more deductive than inductive--something akin to a piece of detective work to account for a puzzling and unanticipated set of events rather than a description of scientific investigation planfully undertaken as an unsinkable test of competing hypotheses. Nonetheless, care has been taken to avoid reductionistic error, and while this effort may best be described as one of deriving and conceptualizing rather than testing an hypothesis, the data support the argument that a negative relationship exists between preestablished "nonstandard" competencies and the later acquisition of "standard" competencies; and that this negative relationship is of sufficient moment to warrent its consideration as a major obstacle to meliorative interventions. Put differently, Bill's failure to achieve success along conventional lines was due, in large measure, to the fact that (1) he had an outstanding repertoire of nonconventional skills; and, because (2) the interference between these competencies represents a significant rather than minor effect on intervention. Further, as a more general point that is unrelated to the strict theoretical issues, there is reason to believe that large numbers of inner-city youths have well developed repertoires of nonstandard competencies--particularly the more talented youths, as exemplified by Bill. Thus, to varying degrees, pre-existent repertoires of nonstandard competencies may affect intervention outcomes negatively over a sizable, as well as an important, segment of the population of inner-city youths.

The support evidence will be discussed longitudinally, moving from some early field observations to a reanalysis of systematically collected data obtained much later. This approach has the advantage of providing an historical perspective to the development of the final ideas. The disadvantage is that it starts off with observations that some would not consider "data;" the more "scientific" evidence is presented later. Although the data are weak from the scientific standpoint, it is especially worthwhile to present these early observations first because they represent the dramatic events that first raised suspicions about the appropriateness of the treatment variables.

The "blot out"

What we had become accustomed to were not examples of hard work that led to success, but repeated examples of hard work that led to spectacular failure. We began to take notice of a kind of behavior that became known as the "blot out" phenomenon: A worker, after weeks and sometimes months of hard work, would manage to bring a youth to the brink of success along a variety of change dimensions only then to experience a crushing defeat in the very flush of victory. A youth about to re-enter school, take a job, give up delinquent associations, stop drinking, or reform some other kind of misbehavior, would often respond by cancelling out months of a worker's progress in a spectacular way that could not be easily remedied. The "blot out" was not universal in occurrence among those brought close to reaching program change objectives, but it occurred with such frequency that workers began to exercise cautious restraint at this perilous juncture in their relationships to their contact youths, i.e., the transfer of in-project successes to real life situations. The following are descriptions of this type of behavior.

JB was an 18 year old Mexican and the unchallenged leader of a street corner gang, the DUKES. Over time the street gang worker assigned to this group managed to establish a close relationship with JB. The boy had a history of serious delinquency offenses; he was aggressive, drank, and generally fitted the popularly conceived stereotype of the hard core, recalcitrant and defiant gang leader. JB became the worker's main concern for about one year and during that time devoted more program resources and effort to helping JB than was received by any other youth during the five year history of the CYDP. If there were a single case that should have succeeded on the basis of reciprocity alone, this one should have been it. The main concern of the worker was to move JB off the street and into a good job. This was necessary for two reasons. One, for JB's own benefit; and, two, it was necessary in order to clear the way to work with other members of the DUKES. As long as JB remained on the street, he not only interfered directly with the worker's efforts with other youths, but JB was able to quickly neutralize any progress the workers made. Any change had to start with JB.

JB was interested in finding work, and several times the worker managed to line up a job; but each time something would go wrong and JB would again find himself back on the corner and unemployed.

But, after months of heroic effort by the worker, JB began to show favorable prospects of moving in the direction of the worker's expectations. He relinquished his leadership position to a boy with more conventional talents. He had stopped almost all of his discordant behavior and listened seriously to the worker's suggestions for establishing a more productive adaptation. For some time the worker took JB into his own home in an effort, somehow, to guard the gains he had made and to allow him the opportunity for even more concentrated effort without having to carry over external interference. Finally, JB agreed to take a full time job obtained for him through the street club worker. At this point JB seemed about to embark on a new life. Project officials and the worker were delighted by these prospects.

The night before JB was to begin his job, the DUKES got together. They liked to drink and they did, very heavily. JB took great pride in his ability to hold his whiskey. The day was the birthday of one of the group members and, in the absence of a cake with candles, JB suggested they burn down the field house in a nearby playlot--and they did. They stood by singing Happy Birthday to "dear Poncho" while the field house burned to the ground. Next, JB suggested they should enter the territory of the Saints, a rural Puerto Rican gang, and fight over a long disputed boundary line; JB was a great fighter. So they entered the Saint's territory, but by then it was almost 3:00 a. m. and no Saints were on the streets at that time. They then decided to call it quits and go home. The group, now fully sober, walked back to its own neighborhood; along the way JB spotted an elderly Negro male waiting for a bus along a well lighted main thoroughfare. JB walked over to this helpless old man and proceeded to beat him severely. This was not the gang's style; moreover, they knew they would be no match (in number) for the retaliation they could expect from neighboring black gangs. They tried to stop JB, but by then police had spotted them and were making a turn in their direction. There was still time to run, but JB remained punching and swearing at the old man until he was pulled off by the police. He even punched him as the police lifted the Negro to his feet. JB was, of course, arrested for this seemingly senseless beating. With that arrest went the job and all the other hopes the worker had for JB.

A more tragic example involves a Puerto Rican youth, MC. MC was highly delinquent and successful at it. He seemed headed for a criminal career. He was an older member of a street gang. Because of his age and the seriousness of his delinquency MC was described by a project supervisor as "rotten ripe" for reform. The CYDP street worker had tried hard to "reach" MC and felt he had succeeded when after months of private counselling MC pledged himself to a new and reformed way of life. This proclamation of change was sudden and dramatic. It had the appearance of a conversion. The worker felt MC was sincere and made plans for him to meet the next day with the project job counsellor; however, that evening, on the way home from the session with the worker, MC attempted to strong arm a local restaurant owner and was shot and killed.

Another youth, DB, was scheduled to appear with an agency official on a TV program as an outstanding example of the project's accomplishment with underprivileged youths. When discovered by the project, he was a highly delinquent and an unemployed drop-out. But, he had outstanding intellectual ability and on that basis he was awarded a scholarship by a youth-serving agency. The worker had interested DB in continuing his education and had arranged for a junior college to waive entrance requirements for him, and finally helped get him the scholarship. On the day he was to appear on the TV show DB withdrew from the college, spent his entire stipend on new clothes, and joined a black militant organization. Needless to say, a different "success" example was found before air time.

Other, but not necessarily as dramatic, examples of case failures could be presented to show what appears to express a basic incompatibility between final project objectives and deeply imbedded target population characteristics resulting in the formation and delivery of a fatal repudiation of the street workers' aims and objectives. Indeed, it could also be argued from these examples that the overall outcome may result in a worsening of the very behavior that the workers were attempting to improve. But the purpose in describing these cases is to provide some of the background events that led us to question the large number of failures--these events implicitly tell the dramatic story of a great conflict within these youths that left them unwilling, or unable, to make the most of the opportunities afforded them. Further, these observations stimulated an interest in finding ways to document the occurrence of failure and to explain it among these "blot-out" and less dramatic cases that led to research and finally the competing competency idea--some themes of which can be seen in the illustrations already presented.

At the time these observations were made, the compelling inference was that there was an element of irrationality behind the seemingly self-initiated avoidance behaviors. This self-defeating behavior among youths in the target population bore the imprint of a much deeper problem than the project designers had anticipated or were prepared to deal with. It bore the marks of resistance best thought of as an irrational force bent on destroying itself. Workers, in the face of such behavior, felt betrayed and reacted much like the distraught parent who pounds his chest and says to his misbehaving child, "After all I have done for you!"

In short, both the research staff and the workers were at a loss, other than psychoanalytically, to account for these failures when they occurred, especially the dramatic cases such as those already described. (The possibility that prior competencies might be a factor never occurred to us even though, ironically, the frustration of the staff grew out of the very fact that these disappointing failures involved youths who were among those felt by the workers to have the greatest potential for reform because of their demonstrated subcultural competencies. But, this connection between possible cause and effect was not considered until much later.)

The "blot-out" was recognized and conceptualized as such on the basis of the early CYDP experiences. Such behavior, however, was not limited to that project.

Although less dramatic in form, observations of trainee behavior in JOBS disclosed similar directions and tendencies. The point at which trainees were most likely to fall was during the transition from the project to an actual work situation, and almost always prior to the point in time when outside employment was to begin. The closer the trainee came to actual employment, the more irrational the justification for failure seemed to be, from an outside point of view.

If a trainee dropped out early in the project, the typical reason for his leaving was to take a job he had found on his own, or because he did not believe the project would be of help to him. If, at an early stage in his project relation, he rejected a job interview assignment from the employment counsellor, typical reasons for refusing were the distance to the company from his home or the early starting time of the working day, even if both were less demanding than that required for mere project attendance. The most obvious cases of irrational "blot-out," however, occurred at a later stage in the project relation; in situations where a trainee, who successfully passed pre-employment tests and interviews and was offered a well-paying job with a future, did something or said something completely uncalled for requiring the personnel man to withdraw the job offer. JOBS unit directors often expressed frustration over their inability to understand why trainees with the highest Alpha scores (a "culture free" intelligence test) were so often the trainees least likely, rather than most likely, to benefit from JOBS. A more commonly recognized and baffling problem was associated with the job-related discrepancy between performance demonstrated by trainees during the routine of the JOBS program, and performance of those same tasks when being considered for employment by personnel representatives--even when the outside personnel person evaluated the trainee in the JOBS setting. This kind of behavior was not due to nervousness but something more fundamental, and again, particularly frustrating because it was prevalent among trainees who were considered to be the most promising. These youths seemed to have a special affinity for accepting help and a special disaffinity for "success" in terms of those behaviors which the program ideally wished to produce. Their behavior arouses the suspicion that they possess the potential capability for demonstrating the desired behavior changes were they inclined to do so. Workers, employers, school personnel, and other key individuals connected with the change effort repeatedly distinguished the subjects as being more "unwilling" than "unable" to demonstrate the various criterion behaviors used to denote final "success." The implication is that the subjects failed by choice; their behavior, although not identical, seems similar in many ways to the behavior of the Borstall boy described in The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner by Sillitoe (1959).

It was on the basis of these early JOBS observations, and still prior to the CYDP "blot-out" recognition, that the research instrument used to evaluate JOBS placed such heavy emphasis on "expectancy" theory--the assumption being that failure occurred because the trainees' "expectations" of failure, i.e., fear of failure in employment, was at the heart of most failures. Expectancy theory was the most suitable theoretical paradigm to fit these observations.

Process study No. 1

By the time the CYDP had been in the field for two years, there was considerable concern over blot-outs and similar behavior to cast doubts on the progress being made in meeting program objectives. In consequence, an interim study was undertaken to gain some indication of progress (Caplan, *et al*., 1964). Essentially the data showed that workers had no great difficulty achieving instrumental goals in working with "problem" youths, e.g., establishing contact, developing a "tight" relationship, and finally, "reaching" youths and obtaining commitment from them to anchor behavior to conventional avenues of achievement such as school or a job or both. However, the attainment of ultimate success goals did not follow expected lines. The relationship of program effort to the achievement of instrumental goals showed a monotonic and additive effect, that is, the more CYDP help, the greater the success in "reaching" the person being worked with. But, the curious and unexplained features to these data were the apparent failure of the instrumental program accomplishments to guarantee final goals accomplishments. These data showed a disproportionate imbalance in the distribution of target youths along the later stages of the "adjustment" scale used to measure project progress, resulting in relatively few final "success" cases but many "near success" cases. Only 4 percent (24) out of 598 youths were classified at the "success" stage; yet 32 percent (191) were classified in the immediate proceeding stage, resulting in a pile-up of "near success" subjects along a seven stage adjustment scale where "success" was the final stage. It appeared that either this evaluation had been made too soon for program efforts to register their full summation-effect (two years after the project had been fielded), or there was some unusual obstacle that foreclosed the possibility of final success for many youths--an obstacle that did not become apparent until a youth was expected to transfer his "in-project" changes to some real-world situations.

The "near-success" pile-up was interpreted by project action agents as an encouraging sign. To them it showed promise that the project was headed for success; all that would be necessary was a final push to move those youths in the near-success adjustment stages over to the success stage. This interpretation was assuring enough to the action practitioners to offset the more pessimistic suspicions of the research team; hence, operational strategies did not change in view of these results.

These data did, indeed, show that the "unreached," "hard-core" youths could be reached through intervention and that meaningful relationships could be established with them. These same data suggested, however, that while reaching the unreached may have merit in its own right, "being reached" did not appear to be an operational requisite for producing those end product behaviors which the action practitioners had set as their ultimate goals.

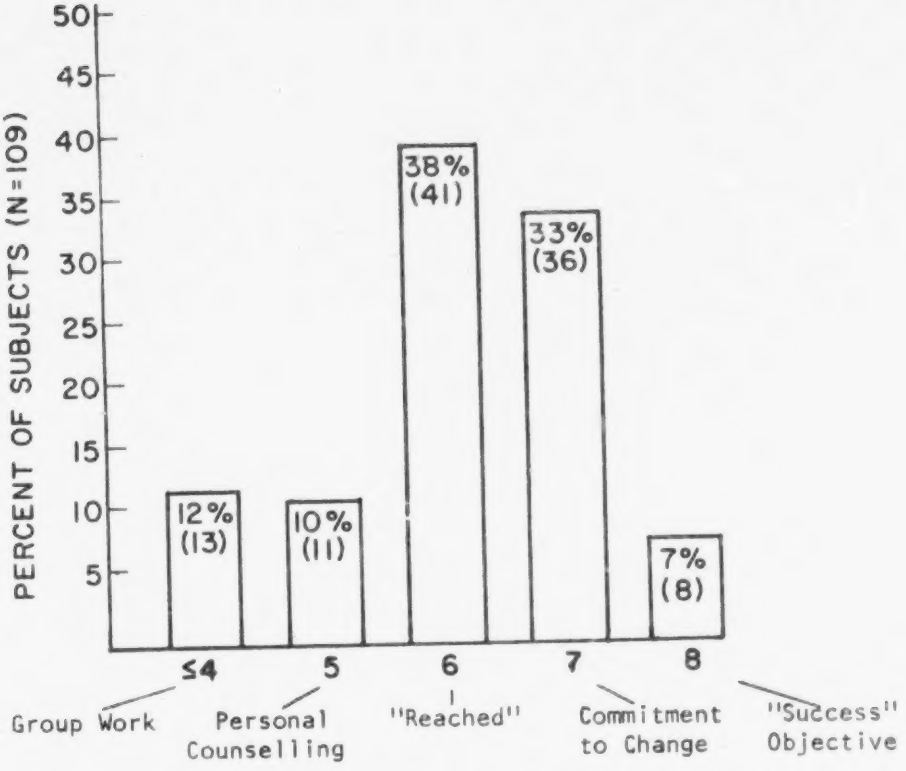
Unfortunately, from an inferential point of view, a serious limitation of this study resulted from reliance upon "frozen history" data--data gathered at a single point in time from subjects with differences in amount of program exposure. While such data provided a valuable point-in-time profile of project accomplishments, the absence of repeated measures on the same individuals through time made it impossible to test the two explanations stated above. In particular, there was no way to ferret out the serial pattern of adjustment stage changes over time from the statistical morass and, in the absence of such information, it was impossible to know what ongoing adjustment trends remained submerged in the data. We could only tell that the workers had no problem in establishing close relationships with youths and bringing them to the threshold of success. We could not use the data to evaluate competing theories to account for the failure to achieve "success."

Process study No. 2

In view of the questions raised by this interim evaluation, another study was soon initiated to take an even closer look at program effects. In contrast to the earlier study, the data were gathered longitudinally within the ongoing context of the action program so that process or trend analysis would be possible. The main departure from the earlier study is this procedural modification allowing for repeated measures for the same individuals at successive points through time. These data were gathered longitudinally, weekly on 109 contact youths within the ongoing context of the CYDP action program for one year, thus making it possible to determine--if given a necessary time lapse for program effects to accrue--the proportion of success cases.

The first consideration was to determine if these new data showed a near-success pile up similar to that noted in the earlier study. Figure 1 shows the final adjustment classification frequencies for the 109 boys. Cursory inspection of the frequency distribution for these adjustment stages clearly indicate a situation similar to that obtained earlier: a near-success pile up is evident from this "time-bound" view of the data presented in Figure 1. However, these data connote a condition of stability in a set of data that, in fact, is nonstationary; harbored in these data are directional change functions whose properties become known through the analysis of the sequential arrangement of adjustment stage changes in relation to the near-success pile-up.

Comparison between the adjustment scale changes for the individual youths over time showed that the disproportionately small number of "success" cases did not arise because the investigation terminated too soon for the additive changes to produce their final summation effect--the position argued by the action team in their interpretation of the



PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT STAGES

Figure 1

Percent of subjects at various adjustment stage positions one year after Stage 5 classification. Key: Stage 4, low level involvement, no individual, i.e., only group, contact between worker and the subject; Stage 5, the subject discusses personal problems, the acquaintanceship between worker and boy becomes "tight;" Stage 6, the boy "opens up," new activities are initiated with a view to affecting the boys future... in social work parlance, the boy is considered "reached;" Stage 7, commitment and preparation for change, a focusing down and more or less coherent striving around a particular behavior change objective...the worker institutes pragmatic intervention steps to facilitate the change; Stage 8, the "success" stage, the youth successfully incorporates behavior changes planned during the earlier stages of the worker-boy relationship. An example would be a boy who accepts and remains with a job after a past history of unwillingness to accept the dicipline of employment.

data from the earlier study. Further, the data from this study show that the small proportion of "success" cases is not due to an arrestment of a positive change pattern; post-stage 7 adjustment classifications do occur, but most are not in the anticipated (i.e., 7-8) range. As was true among the "blot out" cases previously described, the tendency is for subjects to backslide at the point immediately prior to success; rather than make another "positive" change to stage 8, they are more in a negative direction, i.e., back to a pre-stage 7 adjustment level.

The data from this second process study show that adjustment stage reclassification changes are fairly regular and positive in a numerical movement trend throughout the series of stages 4-7, but the trend changes to a predominantly negative direction after that point. These sequential changes are difficult to describe in a brief few paragraphs, but their understanding is crucial because they provide the empirical leads that led to the competing competencies notion. Therefore, it is important that we discuss in detail the longitidinal data and its bearing on the adjustment stage changes.

Figure 2 shows the serial order of subsequent adjustment stage changes beginning with the initial Stage 5 classification, the stage that marks the beginning of individual work. The prior stages involve only worker-boy contact through group work. Eighty nine percent (97) of the 109 initial Stage 5 subjects moved to a numerically higher adjustment stage while only 6 percent (6) remained at Stage 5 throughout the 52 weeks of the study without further change; and a numerically lower or pre-individual treatment (≤ Stage 4) classification followed Stage 5 classification for the remaining 6 percent (6) of the subjects. Of the 97 subjects who made a numerically positive stage change, 86 were reclassified to the next highest adjustment stage, Stage 6 ("reached"); while 11 subjects skipped Stage 6 and advanced directly to Stage 7 (commitment to change).

Subsequent adjustment stage movements for the 86 Stage 6 subjects shown in Figure 2 are as follows: 63 percent (54) were next classified at a numerically positive adjustment stage (all went to Stage 7); 31 percent (27) remained at the Stage 6 classification until termination of the one-year post-Stage 5 study interval; and 6 percent (5) were next classified at a pre-Stage 6 level. Although, in contrast to the Stage 5 events, a proportionately higher number of Stage 6 subjects remained fixed at this adjustment level, the predominant tendency to advance numerically and in serial order is again evident.

Of the initial 109 subjects included in the study of Stage 5, 67 reached Stage 7; 11 skipped to Stage 7 from Stage 5; 54 moved directly to Stage 7 from Stage 6; and 2 subjects who had made a numerically descending adjustment change at Stage 6 later returned to Stage 6 and then moved on to Stage 7. Of these 67 Stage 7 subjects, 15 percent (10) next moved to Stage 8 (success); 28 percent (19) remained at Stage 7 without further change; and 57 percent (38) were next classified at some numerically lower adjustment stage. In contrast with Stages 5 and 6, the predominant post-Stage 7 directional movement tendency is negative.

An important finding seems evident at this point: The small proportion of Stage 8 "success" cases is not due to an arrestment of a positive change pattern; post-Stage 7 adjustment classification changes do occur, but most are not in the anticipated direction. Adjustment stage reclassification changes are fairly regular and positive in directional movement trend throughout the series of instrumental goal stages (Stages 5-7) but the

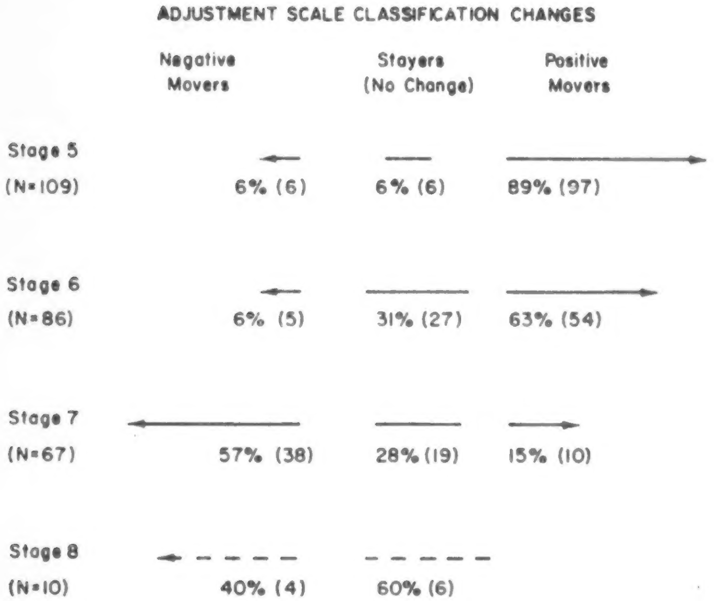


FIGURE 2

Per cent of subjects showing change behavior at each adjustment stage during the initial set of reclassification movements. The lines represent the direction of change and are roughly proportional in length to the number of subjects involved. The dash lines were used at Stage 8 because of the small N.

trend changes to a predominantly negative direction after that point. Before discussing the implications of these results it will be instructive to proceed further by following out the full chain of subsequent adjustment stage reclassifications for the 38 backsliders. These are shown in Figure 3.

First order backsliders Of the 38 subjects who evidenced negative program adjustment change (backsliding) after initial Stage 7 classification, 76 percent (29) were next classified at Stage 6, 18 percent (7) at Stage 5, and 5 percent (2) dropped back to a group work involvement. Assigning a Stage $\leq$ 4 classification and a value of 4 for all cases that drop below Stage 5, the mean adjustment stage change from Stage 7 for these first order backsliders was -1.30.

Second order backsliders After having reached Stage 7 and then having dropped back to a numerically lower adjustment stage level, 33 of the 38 first order backsliders eventually regained Stage 7 classification during the rebound phase of the backsliding loop. Of these subjects, two progressed to Stage 8, two remained at Stage 7 without further change for the remainder of the one year period for study, and 29 dropped back to numerically lower adjustment stages. Of these 29 second order backsliders, 59 percent (17) were next classified at Stage 6, 24 percent (7) at Stage 5, and 17 percent (5) at Stage 4, for a mean adjustment scale change of -1.76 stages.

Third order backsliders Twenty-four of the second order backsliders were reclassified at Stage 7 for the third time during the one year post-Stage 5 period of study. Of these, none advanced to Stage 8. Nine subjects remained at Stage 7 for the duration of the study period, and 15 evidenced Stage 7 backsliding for the third time by reclassification to a numerically lower adjustment stage. Twenty-seven percent (4) of these third

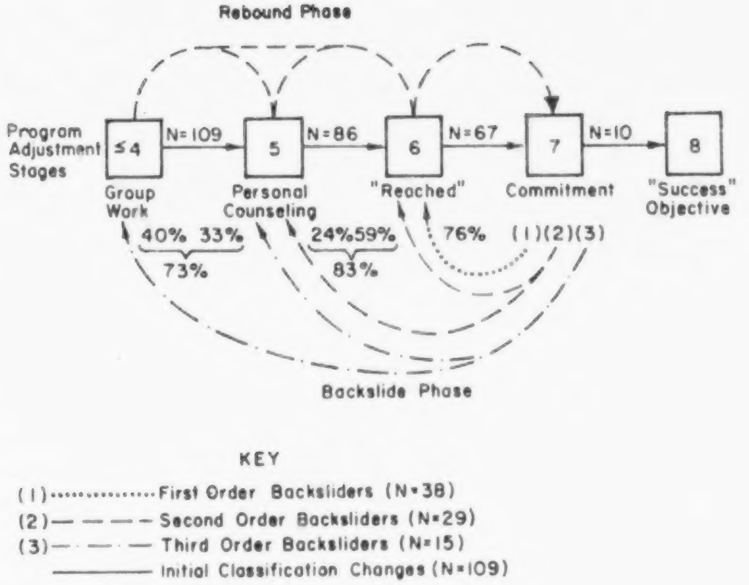

Rebound Phase
Program Adjustment Stages
≤4
N=109
5
N=86
6
N=67
7
N=10
8
Group Work
Personal Counseling
"Reached"
Commitment
"Success" Objective
40% 33%
73%
24% 59%
83%
76%
(1)(2)(3)
Backslide Phase
KEY
(1)................First Order Backsliders (N=38)
(2)— — — — Second Order Backsliders (N=29)
(3)— · — · — Third Order Backsliders (N=15)
———— Initial Classification Changes (N=109)

FIGURE 3

Phase diagram of major adjustment stage reclassification trends for the three successive backsliding orders moving in a clockwise direction.

order backsliders were next classified at Stage 6, 33 percent (5) at Stage 5, and 40 percent (6) at Stage 4 upon leaving Stage 7. The mean adjustment stage change for the third order backsliders is -2.13.

Figure 3 represents visually the series of post-Stage 7 reclassification patterns for each of the three backsliding orders described above. The numbers over the two solid lines between the last three stages indicate the number of subjects that reached Stages 6-8 during the initial series of reclassification changes. The numbers in parentheses below Stage 7 identify esch backslide group by its iteration order: First order backsliders tend to be reclassified at Stage 6; second order backsliders are usually reclassified at Stage 5 or 6; and third order backsliders are most often reclassified at Stage 5 or 4. The Rebound Phase trend lines indicate that backsliders tend to return to Stage 7 via Stage 6, although occasional "skips" from Stage 4 to Stage 6 occur.

Backsliding and Aggregate Response Frequencies

The uncovering of a series of successive post-State 7 backsliding loops throws light on the unresolved issues discussed earlier. The presence of these loops strengthens the "stumbling block" of a success obstacle hypothesis and also helps to explain the presence of weak correlation between program adjustment change and those variables presumed to be critical or instrumental in producing such change.

In connection with this latter issue, the foregoing discussion on backsliding is immediately relevant. Backsliding activity makes possible the simultaneous appearance of subjects at any one adjustment stage classification who represent various backslide iteration orders. However, a meaningful set of zero order correlations between adjustment changes and variables associated with such change would require that subjects at each adjustment classification stage be characterized by identical processes of change. It can now be seen that the static representation in Figure 1, and undoubtedly the data mentioned from the earlier study as well, include subjects from different backsliding orders at the adjustment classification stages with each group of backsliders probably holding a different set of independent variable relationships to a common dependent variable measure. Thus, by statistically treating a multi-state condition as multiple responses, obtained results will have been so confounded as to be almost meaningless.

Under such circumstances, aggregate response frequencies would probably most often tend to decrease the values used to make statistical inferences. For concreteness, a variable used in the earlier study, "length of time known," i.e., how long the subject has been known to the worker, provides an obvious illustration. During the initial ascent through the adjustment stages it could be presumed safely that "time known" and adjustment classification would be positively correlated -- those at Stage 6 are likely to have been known to the worker longer than those at Stage 5, but not for as long as those at Stage 7. However, if we examined the Stage 5 subjects at any one point in time, subjects representing different backsliding orders are likely to be found. Thus, whatever differences may be represented a correlation between "time known" and program progress would be largely attenuated because of the presence of mixed orders of backsliders at each program adjustment stage. The validity of any set of intercorrelations among variables associated with the change process described here would depend upon: (a) the extent to which the interrelationships vary with successive orders of backsliding, and (b) the numbers of subjects representing each backsliding order at each adjustment stage.

One point remains to be made regarding the additive or simple "summation effect" hypothesis before introducing additional data. While the data in Figure 2 alone are sufficient to discredit the possibility of a linear summation treatment model, these findings do not constitute an unambiguous disconfirmation of the possibility that continued work would lead to success. Conceivably, even after more backsliding, the majority of subjects might spin off to Stage 8. Insofar as these data can show, however, continued work over time does not appear to be positively related to the probability of future Stage 8 classification; in fact, Stage 8 classification, after the initial progress through the adjustment stages, became increasingly less likely with each successive iteration of the backsliding orders. Six of the eight subjects shown at Stage 8 in Figure 1 proceeded to that stage directly from Stage 7 without backsliding, two second order backsliders spun off to Stage 8 and remained there, but no third order backslider reached Stage 8. The two second order backslide subjects who achieved Stage 8 classification were the least time-tested among the success cases. One was classified at Stage 8 less than a month before termination of the study interval; the other was so classified five weeks before the end of the study interval. Thus, while continued work with backsliders may have served a variety of important social and personal purposes, and may have even produced positive changes which will remain submerged and undetected until later life, the present data suggest that continued efforts with backsliders did not serve to advance immediate program objectives.

To summarize, over time, individual subjects repeatedly demonstrate a tendency to nearly succeed in adopting final change behaviors advocated by the treatment program. The same individuals can be "reached" repeatedly, and repeatedly demonstrate considerable program-related behavior changes (i.e., advancing from Stages 4-8); but, despite considerable preparation for and expectation of post-program transfer of these changes, these individuals repeatedly fail when faced with the prospect of moving from Stage 7 to Stage 8 after backsliding to a pre-Stage 7 adjustment classification. These same individuals (with the help of the workers) then enter a "rebound" phase, during which they again make positive progress back up to Stage 7, but once again, only to backslide rather than to go on to Stage 8.

The uncovering of the series of successive post-Stage 7 backsliding-rebound loops for the same individuals in the second process study throws light on the issues raised by the earlier study. It can now be seen that the static representations in Figure 1 and, undoubtedly, the data mentioned from the earlier study as well, include subjects in different backsliding-rebound "loops." For example, a particular youth who, in the time-bound presentation, is counted as being at Stage 6, may have previously been at Stage 7 (i.e., a backslider); another youth also at Stage 6 may have never gone beyond Stage 7 (i.e., a stayer), another youth at Stage 6 at the same point in time may have previously progressed to Stage 7, fallen back to Stage 5, and now is moving up to Stage 7 again (i.e., a rebounder). Thus, Figure 1 gives the impression of a frequency distribution representing a single state condition for each classification stage when, in fact--as evident from the longitudinal data--each stage shown in Figure 1 represents a multi-state condition, i.e., some "stayers" and two types of "movers"--"backsliders" and "rebounders."

This sharp reversal in the direction of adjustment changes occurring between Stages 7 and 8, and the reiteration of this near-miss tendency by the same individuals over time, discredit the possibility of a linear summation model of treatment effect: continued work over time does not appear to be positively related to the advancement of program objectives. In addition to this finding, this second study is of relevance to our immediate concern. Of particular interest are the findings that: (1) workers concentrated an inordinate amount of their energies and program resources on a few youths, and (2) those that received this concentrated effort were chronic backsliders

A discussion of why certain youths were selected out for intensive work by the street gang workers, and why these same young men repeatedly failed when brought to the brink of success, fell beyond the scope of the earlier work; the purpose there was to determine the significance of "near success" pile-up. In consequence, in conjunction with the issues more directly related to the main concern of this report, another study was undertaken to gain understanding of the iterated backsliding loops; and, as a result of that inquiry the connection between the quantitative findings of the two previously described process studies and the earlier blot-out observations became evident. This, in turn, led to some of the early conceptualizations of the competing competency theory.

Failure and nonstandard competencies

The selection of "contact" youths The chief objective of the CYDP was to work with innercity youths whose behavior was defined negatively, e.g., delinquent, drop out, unemployed, etc., and to move these youths along "prosocial" lines of endeavor. Thus, if the workers followed their instructions, one would expect that those youths whom the workers sought out to work with were more likely to be those in greatest need of the workers' help, i.e., those having the greatest problems with school, the law, and unemployment; and, indeed, this was the case. Twenty-four percent of random sample male youths residing in the CYDP target areas had official delinquency records, whereas 34 percent of the youths involved in a working relation with the street workers (henceforth to be referred to as "contact" youths) had official delinquency records. Among those youths with official delinquency records, the mean number of offenses was 1.70 for the random sample, and 3.11 for the contacts. Thus the contact youths were more likely to have a delinquency record and their delinquency was more habitual.

The drop out data shows a difference in the same direction. For random sample youths, no longer in school, 31 percent had graduated and 69 percent had left for other reasons, i.e., drop out, push out, "sickness." Among the contact youths, only 8 percent of those no longer attending school had graduated while 92 percent had left for other reasons.

Finally, the employment data also show similar differences. After controlling for age and race, the employment rate was higher for the random sample: approximately 34 percent of the random sample youths held jobs compared with only 15 percent of the contact youths from the same geographic areas.

Thus, if we accept school, delinquency, and employment data as indices of social adjustment, it seems clear that those youths who received the workers' attention were those in greatest need of the program's services. The workers, then, appeared to have selected out the right youths to work with. Carrying this line of reasoning further, we could expect to find that workers concentrated their energies on those youths having the *greatest* difficulty with the law, school, and employment; that is, just as the target population represented those with less satisfactory records of conventional adjustment, it would be expected that the allocation of program resources would be greatest for those in the target samples with the poorest records of conventional adjustment. The data, however, do not show a high degree of relationship between program-input and "need" among those in the contact group.

The relationship between "need" and program imput The correlation (Kendall's tau beta) between the amount of help a boy received and his "need," based on a composite score involving measures of delinquency, school, and employment adjustment, was .28 (cf. Caplan, *et al*., 1964). This small degree of relationship between "need" and program input is surprising, and suggests the possibility that the workers were deploying their resources on the basis of criteria other than those intended by the program sponsors. This lack of relationship between "need" and program input becomes evident if we compare chronic backsliders in the second process study with other contact youths. If program resources were being allocated on the basis of need, then one would expect that those receiving the most worker input (as measured by a "BST" or Blood Sweat, and Tears scale, c.f., Caplan, 1968) would also be the youths with the most "need" for help. This does not, however, appear to have occurred.

In the second process study, youths who achieved a stage 7 classification three times, only to backslide and rebound each time without ever advancing to Stage 8, were referred to as "third-order backsliders"--as opposed to youths who were brought to the brink of success less than three times during the one-year period under investigation without achieving it. These third order backsliders received on the average five to eight times the amount of worker attention and program recources (BST) than other CYDP contact youths (matched for age differences). "Daily contact" (one of the items included in the composite BST index) for unbroken periods of a month or more, was not uncommon among the 15 third order backsliders; by contrast, repeated daily contact with other contact youths in that same study seldom continued beyond a week, and then only at times of crisis.

Thus, there can be no question that the chronic backsliders received more attention; but, as already mentioned, they did not differ from the other contacts on the key "need" items--delinquency, school status, or employment. About 50 percent in each group (third order backsliders versus all other contact youths) had official delinquency records; approximately 95 percent in each group had left school without graduating and only about 20 percent held jobs (these figures are somewhat higher than the mean figures for the total target population because these comparisons involved the older youths). (The mean age of the backsliders was 15.4, and for purposes of the above comparison, only contacts of approximately the same age were used. Thus these comparisons excluded many younger youths so that age-related variables could be controlled in determining factors affecting the BST and social adjustment measures relationship.)

This raises an important question. If, when considered in the aggregate, the youths who received the greatest amount of attention were not in greatest "need" on the basis of the operational standards of the program, what, then, was so unique about these youths: why did (1) workers devote such inordinate efforts to move these particular youths along "prosocial" lines; (2) what was the reason for the repeated failure to "succeed;" and (3) why did the workers continue in their attempts to help these youths in the face of repeated failure while other target population youths with greater "need" received less attention?

Time after time program supervisors found themselves at a loss to understand why workers would devote inordinate amounts of time and resources to helping a boy after repeated failure experiences. They spoke of the workers as having been "captured" by certain youths, and it was not uncommon for a worker to be threatened with dismissal for having concentrated his attention for months at a time on a handful of youths. Knowing that there were many delinquents, dropouts, and unemployed in the target areas, it seemed senseless to spend valuable program resources to facilitate the social development of a few seemingly incurable types and thereby forfeit the chance for the large-scale impact the project had hoped to achieve. From the perspective of the supervisors, the only outstanding qualities of these backsliders were their (1) apparent resistance to change, and (2) their apparent ability to make a "patsy" out of the worker.

Before unraveling this puzzle further, it should be stated that backsliding was not limited to the CYDP, its objectives, or its style of work. Some of the same CYDP youths who were subjects in the previously described "process" studies enrolled in the JOBS project and exhibited a similar pattern of failure. But, because JOBS was a building-based, relatively formal program of short duration it was difficult for the project staff to find these failures in the open community and convince them to reenter the program. Conversely, it was easier for the CYDP staff to pursue its target population and start over again. Nevertheless, there are some interesting similarities in the behavior of youths who experienced both projects. Thirteen second and third order backsliders in the CYDP study enrolled in JOBS during the course of the second process study. Only 2 were placed in jobs that they held for 6 months or longer (neither completed the 52 week program; both threatened to leave the project and, in consequence, were placed in employment by the third week after enrolling). The remaining 11 dropped out by the fifth week in the program; of these, 4 were placed on jobs, none of which were held for more than 3 weeks. Thus, none of the 13 backsliders remained in the project for more than 5 weeks, and of the 6 placed on jobs, only 2 remained employed for longer than 3 weeks.

Of 58 non-backsliders in the second CYDP process study, 20 entered JOBS. Fifteen remained for the full term of the project; of these, 10 were placed in employment, of which 7 held their jobs for 6 months or longer. (On balance, the non-backslider response is similar to that of the average enrollee in JOBS (Gurin, 1968).

Two things are worth noting in comparing the CYDP and JOBS behavior of the same youths: (1) The chronic backsliders who repeatedly failed to show the desired behavioral changes despite the heavy investment of CYDP program resources also did not do well in JOBS. Most dropped out early, and in only two out of 15 cases (14 percent) could it be argued that the JOBS program might have been of some value in facilitating employment. Thus it does not appear that those youths whom the CYDP workers were trying hardest to help were benefited any more from JOBS than they did from the CYDP. The JOBS story, however, was somewhat different for other youths in contact with the CYDP. (2) Those who had not been singled out for special attention by the street workers showed a more favorable response to JOBS. They remained in the program longer, had a slightly higher percentage (19 percent--11 out of 58) placed in employment, and these held their jobs for 6 months or longer.

The percentage point differences in job holding between these two subgroups would probably not hold up as a statistically significant difference because of the small numbers of cases involved. But the two groups do differ at a statistically significant level, when compared on the length of time they remained in JOBS. The CYDP third-order backsliders were clearly the early JOBS leavers. Of the 15 backsliders entering JOBS, 11 (73 percent) left within the first month and none remained enrolled for longer than 21 weeks. By contrast, of the 58 CYDP contacts entering JOBS, only seven (12 percent) left during the first month and 27 (47 percent) remained enrolled until completion. Thus, when those receiving the highest levels of CYDP program input are compared with contact youths comparable in "need" on the basis of employment, delinquency, etc., but receiving less program input, the evidence from JOBS supports the contention, based on the CYDP data, that those highest on program input (BST) were also the least likely to benefit from such forms of help (CYDP or JOBS).

Who are the "High-BST:Low Success" youths? Why did the workers single them out for special attention? The answers to these questions did not emerge as important until it became evident that the program had not succeeded and that the workers may have tried hardest to help youths with special problems that prevented the transfer of in-project influence.

It would have, indeed, been fortunate if the High-BST:Low Success phenomenon had been identified as such during the course of the project. Then it would have been possible to investigate the matter directly rather than having to rummage through data originally collected for other purposes in order to retrospectively create a credible explanation. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence exists to argue that the workers were drawn to these particular youths and persevered in trying to help them because these were the youths felt by the workers to hold the greatest promise in life--an estimate of ability derived from awareness of their "nonstandard" competencies. These were the youths who had made the most out of their limited environments--those who had managed to cope, and even to thrive under conditions of very limited opportunity. They had made the most of the opportunities most immediately available to them through the application of their intelligence and talents. These were the youths with the greatest repertoire of socialization of street competencies. The workers were able to see that these were more exceptional youths, youths with proven ability, and what they did was to undertake the challenge of redirecting their talents and abilities along more conventional channels. The workers were, in a sense, attempting to produce a resource transformation, converting a person high in nonstandard competencies to one high in standard competencies. In short, the workers chose to selectively allocate their resources on youths with demonstrated ability, as evidenced by their nonstandard competencies.

Once in the field, the worker soon became aware that there were simply too many delinquent, dropout, and unemployed youths to work with separately. He had to put his time and energies where they could have the greatest payoff and that usually meant working with the "jewels in the swamp," so to speak--those with demonstrated ability, those who were in some sense, already successful in other areas of human functioning--these became his targets for a number of reasons. One, these were the youths who were the pace setters, the identifying figures, the leaders. If the worker was able to move them successfully along prosocial lines, they, in turn, might produce a spread of effect. Others would follow their example more so than that of a lower status person. Not only would he be effective as an example, but it was hoped that such a person might actually help the worker produce a "spread of effect" by using his talents and skills by working directly with others--equal in "need" as defined by the program, but less able to meet life demands as adequately. Two, the payoffs could be presumed greater by redirecting the behavior of a person high in nonstandard skills simply because they were more talented as evidenced by their nonstandard skills; it was believed that they should also be the most able to acquire and become most highly proficient in conventional skills. Three, these were the more interesting youths. The worker learned from them, he liked them, he preferred their company; he would get the greatest personal reward by having an impact on their lives.

Nonstandard competencies and program input

Empirical support for the argument that the High-BST:Low-success group was composed of youths with the largest repertoire of street competencies comes from survey interview data: more specifically, data on daily activities and time budgeting showing that youths who exhibit the best development of non-standard skills based on self-reported activity records were also those least likely to succeed along conventional lines when compared with youths less proficient in nonstandard competencies.

Activity profiles

Twice during the course of the CYDP project interviews were carried out with the total contact populations and randomly selected noncontact samples from the control and experimental areas were chosen to evaluate the impact of the project. Included each time were interviews with the total contact population. A total of 1,600 male youths between 10 and 16 years of age living in low-income Spanish-speaking, Italian, and black communities in the near Westside, inner-city area of Chicago were interviewed. Each interview lasted about 1-1/2 to 2 hours and focused on a variety of areas of information pertaining to personal goals, attitudes, values, self-reports of conventional and unconventional behavior, and demographic and background items. In addition, respondents were also asked to relate "...everything you did yesterday from the time you got up in the morning until you went to bed for the night." The purpose of this item was to sample activities and time allocations.

Interviews were conducted seven days a week and as early in the day as possible so that the prior day's activities were still fresh in the mind of the respondent. The "activity" question alone required an average of

45 minutes of interview time. Coding was complicated and required sometimes as much as 45 minutes to an hour per respondent. Each reported event was coded for time, location, and type of activity. On the basis of this coding procedure an "activity profile" was developed for each of the 1,600 respondents. Our purpose here will be to examine these activity data with a view to demonstrating a relationship between nonstandard skills and program input. If such a relationship could be demonstrated, then it would be safe to infer a negative relationship between nonstandard competencies and "success" as the reason for the "High-BST: Low success" finding; and, in turn, it would provide support for the competing competencies.

Nonstandard skills The activity question was entirely open-ended and not designed specifically to measure the prevalence of standard and nonstandard skills. In fact, it was not until some five years after the first data were collected that the thought of scanning these data for such purposes arose. The problems in recoding and reordering these data for this purpose pertained more to nonstandard rather than to standard activities, as the original coding scheme was designed for the purpose of measuring the amount of "conventional" activities, or what we have called "standard skills." The original coding, however, did not count or categorize with any degree of specificity what we have been referring to as "nonstandard" skills. Thus, to gain knowledge of nonstandard skills we had to return to these interviews and identify the presence or absence of nonstandard skills in the activity protocols of activities. Activities such as those listed earlier in Figure 1 in Chapter 2 were classified as "nonstandard."

Having completed the re-coding for evidence of nonstandard competencies the interviews were divided into the following four subgroups:

1. Standard activities Youths whose reported activities were almost exclusively "standard," i.e., little or no reported participation in nonstandard activities.

2. Predominantly standard activities Youths whose reported activities were predominantly "standard" activities, i.e., only a few "nonstandard" activities with relatively little time allotted to them.

3. Predominantly nonstandard activities Youths whose reported records were predominantly "nonstandard," but who, nevertheless, participated in some "standard" activities, e.g., one-third attended school (but none reported devoting any after school time to school related activities such as home work).

4. Nonstandard activities Youths who reported nonstandard activities almost exclusively. The standard activities reported for those in this category were few and not time consuming. Note, however, that these were not inactive, out of school, out of work youths. They passed their time engaged in "nonstandard" activities which required some degree of skill to execute. Indeed, many youths (undoubtedly many of them nonworking, nonschool attending, who simply "did nothing") reported too few activities to allow classifications and were excluded from the four activity groups described here. Either they lacked both standard or nonstandard skills, or they were simply being uncooperative with our interviewer. In either case, their exclusion from the study could not be viewed as a serious loss (they were not included as an additional activity type group since they probably represented a residual mix that would add little or nothing to the analysis).

Further, it should be added that sufficient numbers of youths exhibited equal amounts of standard and nonstandard skills to have justified a "mixed" activity type category that could have appeared between categories two and three. To simplify analysis, however, we did not include such a category, preferring instead to limit our attention to youths with the most distinctive differences when divided by the types of activities in which they engaged. Therefore, the discussion to follow will concentrate upon those youths who can be easily differentiated with respect to their activities, i.e., they fall into either one or the other of two degrees of nonstandard or standard but not mixed activities. For the record, however, of the youths that could be classified by activity type, about 30 percent of all youths surveyed would fall into the "mixed" category, about 20 percent in the standard categories, about 50 percent in one or the other of the nonstandard categories. The discussion to follow will not involve the "mixed" category; comparison will be made only on the basis of the four activity-type categories described earlier.

Further, because we have "input" and related data only on those youths who were subjects in the process studies described earlier, we will limit our activity type analysis to them and not discuss the activity type distribution for the total sample of 1,600 youths. The reason for concentrating on this subsample, as will become evident shortly, is that it will allow us to relate activity type data to other known characteristics, particularly program input data.

Of the 180 youths on whom we had Process study No. 1 data, 143 could be classified into one of the four activity categories. No reliable judgment could be made for 37 of the 180 youths under study. Thus, the percentage of cases by type of activity category is as follows for the 142 classifiable cases:

9% (13)	19% (28)	47% (68)	24% (34)
(1) Standard	(2) Predominantly Standard	(3) Predominantly Nonstandard	(4) Nonstandard

Table 1

Distribution of activity patterns for CYDP contacts. (Figures are based entirely on those falling into one of the four classifications shown. "Mixed" and "unclassifiables" are not included.)

Our next task is to relate program input and, later, program progress data to these categories, thus making it possible to partial out (1) the relationship of program input to activity patterns and (2) the relationship of success-failure patterns to activity data.

Program input

In the Process Study No. 1 we did not use as detailed account of program input as we did in Process Study No. 2 where the BST scale was used. But we do have one item, however, in the first study which, although not perhaps as specific as we would like, can serve as a rough indication program input, namely, "Time spent with boy."

A description of the scale used to classify the varying amounts of "time spent with" the youths during the first process study is printed below. Following each classification is the percentage of the 143 contacts classified into each of these categories at the time of the Process Study No. 1:

Input Level I:	Two hours a week or less--3.9 percent (55)
Input Level II:	More than two hours a week, but no routinized one-to-one working relationships--46 percent (67)
Input Level III:	One-to-one counselling/working relationships requiring three hours or more a week of the workers' time; daily contact with the youths--15 percent (21)

Table 2

Distribution of program input as measured by workers' estimate of time spent with each CYDP contact (N = 143).

If we cross classify the data in Tables 1 and 2 for each youth in the form of a 3X4 table, we find the distribution of cases across these cells as shown in Table 3. The correlation of .38 reveals a general tendency for program input to be positively related to the presence of nonstandard activities. While this relationship is informative in its own right, the major significance of this table resides in the fact that level three program input (i.e., High BST) was predominantly given to youths whose activity patterns were nonstandard. Of 34 youths with nonstandard activity patterns, 15 or 44 percent of those with the greatest extent of nonstandard activities, received level three program input. Thus program resources were clearly concentrated upon those youths with the highest level of nonstandard activities. By contrast, only about five percent of those in other activity categories (6 out of 109) received such high levels of program input [i.e., of the 34 nonstandard cases 15 (44 percent) received level three input whereas, of the 109 cases in the predominantly nonstandard, predominantly standard, and standard activity types, only six received level three input.]

If we combine the level three input of those whose activity profiles were classified as predominantly nonstandard with those classified as nonstandard, the contrast is even more striking. This combined group received a full 90 percent of the level three input compared to ten percent for those whose activity patterns were predominantly or exclusively standard. Perhaps the most striking way to illustrate this finding is to point out that ten percent of the total number of youths in contact with the program (15 out of 143) received 71 percent of the highest level of program input and that this ten percent represented youths whose activity patterns were exclusively nonstandard. Those with exclusively nonstandard patterns were 3.7 times more likely to receive the highest level of program input than those with predominantly nonstandard patterns.

Yet, as indicated earlier, from the standpoint of program objectives, the exclusively nonstandard group did not "need" program attention any more than those who received lesser degrees of attention. Thus our conclusion is that the nonstandard group was chosen for concentrated allocation of program resources because of this obvious success potential as manifested in their repertoire of nonstandard competencies.

It is not our purpose here to argue that there exists a general relationship between the input of program resources and nonstandard activities. Our concern is primarily with deducing some of the characteristics of backsliders and, on the basis of Table 3 information, it seems fair to infer that they must have been high in nonstandard skills. Backsliders would have all qualified for level three input, and from what Table 3 tells us, it would appear safe to assume that program input at that level of intensity goes almost exclusively to youths who evidence activity patterns that are predominantly or exclusively nonstandard.

This in itself does not prove much in its own right. Our first presumption would be that the most active in nonstandard activities would be the more delinquent and therefore the most likely candidates for reform; for, if there were one single thing the program wanted to accomplish over all else, it was to reduce delinquency. But, there is no evidence of a relationship between delinquency and the degree of nonstandard activities as shown in the activity profiles of the youths studied. The support for this contention comes from two sources. First, in the first process study the correlation between time spent with youths (Program Input in Table 3) and delinquency was .28. Thus, there is no reason to infer that delinquency and the degree of nonstandard activities are correlated highly. This in fact turns out to be the case. The mean for the number of delinquencies for the 34 "nonstandards" in Table 3 is 1.8, 1.4 for the predominantly nonstandard. 1.8 for the predominantly standard, and 1.7 for the group of standards. Thus, it appears that workers were devoting the highest level of personal work and program resources to youths high in nonstandard activities for reasons other than delinquency.

The next question to address ourselves to concerns employment. If there is no relationship between delinquency and nonstandard activities to account for the disproportionately high input, is it possible that there is a relationship between nonstandard activities and unemployment? Are these high program-input youths given special treatment because they have the greatest problems in obtaining work? The answer appears to be "no." The employment rates do not differ so greatly across the groups represented

Table 3

Program Input Levels and Activity Profile Identification*

Activity Profile Types	Program Input Level Low 1	 Medium 2	 High 3	Total
Nonstandard 4	7 (5%)	12 (8%)	15 (10%)	34
Predominantly Nonstandard 3	24 (17%)	40 (28%)	4 (3%)	79
Predominantly Standard 2	19 (13%)	8 (6%)	1 (1%)	28
Standard 1	5 (3%)	7 (5%)	1 (1%)	13
Total	55	67	21	143

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* tau beta = .46 P (ZA > X) < .05, using a one tail test of significance. Percentages of total cases are given in parentheses.

by the activity profile groups in Table 3. The percentage of employed youths for four activity groups--nonstandard through standard--are as follows; 43 percent, 48 percent, 41 percent, 47 percent (see footnote 1, Chapter 2 for a detailed analysis of variables associated with nonemployment).

The significance of all of these tables and supplementary analysis resides in the fact that the relationship between high program input and the high level of nonstandard activity cannot be accounted for by the more routine expectations with respect to the "need" criteria that was expected to regulate the expenditure of program input. The thesis put forth here that (1) it was not "need" but potential, as exemplified in the youths' repertoire of nonstandard skills, that drew the workers' attention to special youths, and (2) these very competencies that attracted the workers prevented the success of the repeated efforts of these workers to "succeed" with these youths, because of (3) the importance of these pre-established competencies to identity, self worth, intrinsic reward, and the like.

In summary, we have shown:

1. Workers devote inordinate amounts of program resources to certain youths.

2. Despite these inordinate efforts, the workers are no more likely to succeed in "helping" these youths than those receiving lesser amounts of attention. In fact, these youths appear to be less amenable to change program efforts.

2

3. The workers' attraction to these youths is not a function of "need" defined in terms of school and employment problems.

4. The one outstanding characteristic that these High-program-input:Low-success youths share appears to be their outstanding repertoire of nonstandard skills.

5. Therefore, on the basis of evidence discussed earlier, our presumptions are: (a) workers are attracted to those youths because of their demonstrated ability in nonstandard skills and (b) they "cream off" these youths from the pool of those eligible for program treatments and devote inordinate attention and program resources to "helping them;" and (c) these very same competencies which, in view of the workers make such youths prime candidates for reform, produce a negative effect on their efforts to help these youths succeed in new, more conventional areas of activities.

Footnote 1, Chapter III

In view of the importance of the employment-relevant findings to the present report, it is worth reporting an examination of the relationship between a set of variables and employment. What follows is a description of an analysis to determine the explanatory value of variables to account for variations between employed and unemployed.

Sample

The interview data to be discussed were obtained from 794 males, 13 to 19 years of age residing in the economically disadvantaged, inner-city areas of Chicago. Forty-one of these were known to have enrolled in JOBS 1. Five hundred and twenty-two respondents are Negro. Two hundred and seventy-two are white, primarily from Italian, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Anglo backgrounds, in that order. These subjects represent a sample of male youths residing in a randomly selected number of households. Represented here are boys comparable to a random sample of inner-city youths to be found typically in most large metropolitan areas in the United States. Data were collected during 1963-64 by a team of professional interviewers.

Dependent variable

Employment is the dependent variable in the discussion to follow. The plan of analysis is to determine if a set of predictor (i.e., "independent") variables are associated with variations between those subjects who are employed and those who are not. That is, to what degree and in what way is the probability of holding a job dependent upon or, more accurately, associated with, the presence of these predictor variables?

For the sake of simplicity, a dichotomous coding of the dependent variable subjects is categorized on the basis of whether the subjects are or are not employed. Admittedly, this distinction between employed and unemployed ignors qualitative matters such as differences in job prestige, pay, number of hours worked, and so on; but, as we will see shortly, partitioning the dependent variable as a binary does not do violence to the data, since qualitative distinctions can be traced out at any point in the analysis to follow.

Because it would be instructive to consider at least a few of the many qualitative features of the jobs to be discussed, the following deserve mention, by way of setting the stage for the data to follow. The mean number of hours worked for part-time workers is 12.0 (SD=4.1); the mean earnings are $1.10 (SD=.18) for part-time workers and $1.37 (SD=.27) for those in full-time employment; and the mean measure of job prestige based on Duncan (1962) ratings is 14.0 (SD=7.7) for part-time job holders and 29.2 (SD=13) for full-time jobs. Finally, the mean age in years for those respondents holding part-time employment is 15.4 (SD=1.6) and 17.8 (SD=0.7) for those in full-time jobs.

Briefly summarizing the important employment characteristics, 34 percent of the sample held jobs; of those employed, 52 percent worked part-time and 48 percent worked full-time; subjects holding full-time employment were on the average about a year older than those who were employed part-time. Full-time employed subjects reported pay averaging $1.37 per hour, or twenty-seven cents more per hour than part-time job holders. Those holding part-time employment were generally younger and were engaged in jobs primarily of a low-level manual type, while those subjects in full-time employment held service or operation level jobs.

Predictor variables

The five sets of independent or predictor variables are: (1) Demographic--gross environmental features such as "housing" (private vs. public); (2) Social environment--family structure and social relations; such as whether the family is intact, sibship composition, etc.; (3) Values and perceptions--present value judgments, future hopes and aspirations, and the attribution of motive and sentiment to those around him, (4) Interpersonal influence--what relationships and group memberships are valued and why (i.e., "Significant Others"); and (5) Institutional activities--school status, enrollment in JOBS, club membership.

In some instances the variable measures correspond with actual raw data and in other instances they represent either composite or factorially derived and weighted measures. A total of 41 predictor variables were fed into the analysis; only those variables shown to contribute to the explained variance will be discussed in the analysis to follow.

Statistical treatment

A multivariate analysis of variance technique was used to analyze the data. The method simultaneously scans all predictor variables until it determines the particular variable and its scale value "split" accounting for the largest difference between employed and unemployed by a single division of the total sample. After that, the computer again scans all predictor variables to locate additional "splits" or subsample divisions which, in conjunction with the previous split(s) provide the highest amount of accountable variance (sum squares). This iteration procedure continues until all dependent variable separations accounting for a variance reduction of more than one-half of one percent (0.5 percent) are detected. The rationale for the particular procedure employed is discussed by Morgan and Sonquist (1963). These same authors also describe the computational procedures employed (1964).

Results

Employment-related differences

A multivariate analysis of variance was computed to compare differences on predictor variables measures among employed and unemployed subjects (N=749). The results are shown in the form of a multivariate "tree" in Figure 1. (Table 1 shows the variables that account for 1 percent or more of the variance, listed in order of their explanatory power. The percentage given to the right for each variable listed in the table indicates the amount of variance accounted for by the variable if used to make a single division of the whole sample.)

In Figure 1 each group or subgroup of subjects is designated by a number at the top of each box. The percentage included within each box indicates the proportion of subjects holding employment for the group represented by the box. The numbers in parentheses show how many subjects are included in each group. Thus, for Group 1, 34 percent of the 749 subjects held jobs.

Continuing to follow out the data illustrated in Figure 1, it can be seen that the statistical search process determined that "Age" and, specifically, the separation between subjects who are 18 and those 13 through 17 presented the best division (total of sum squares) between employed and unemployed subjects.

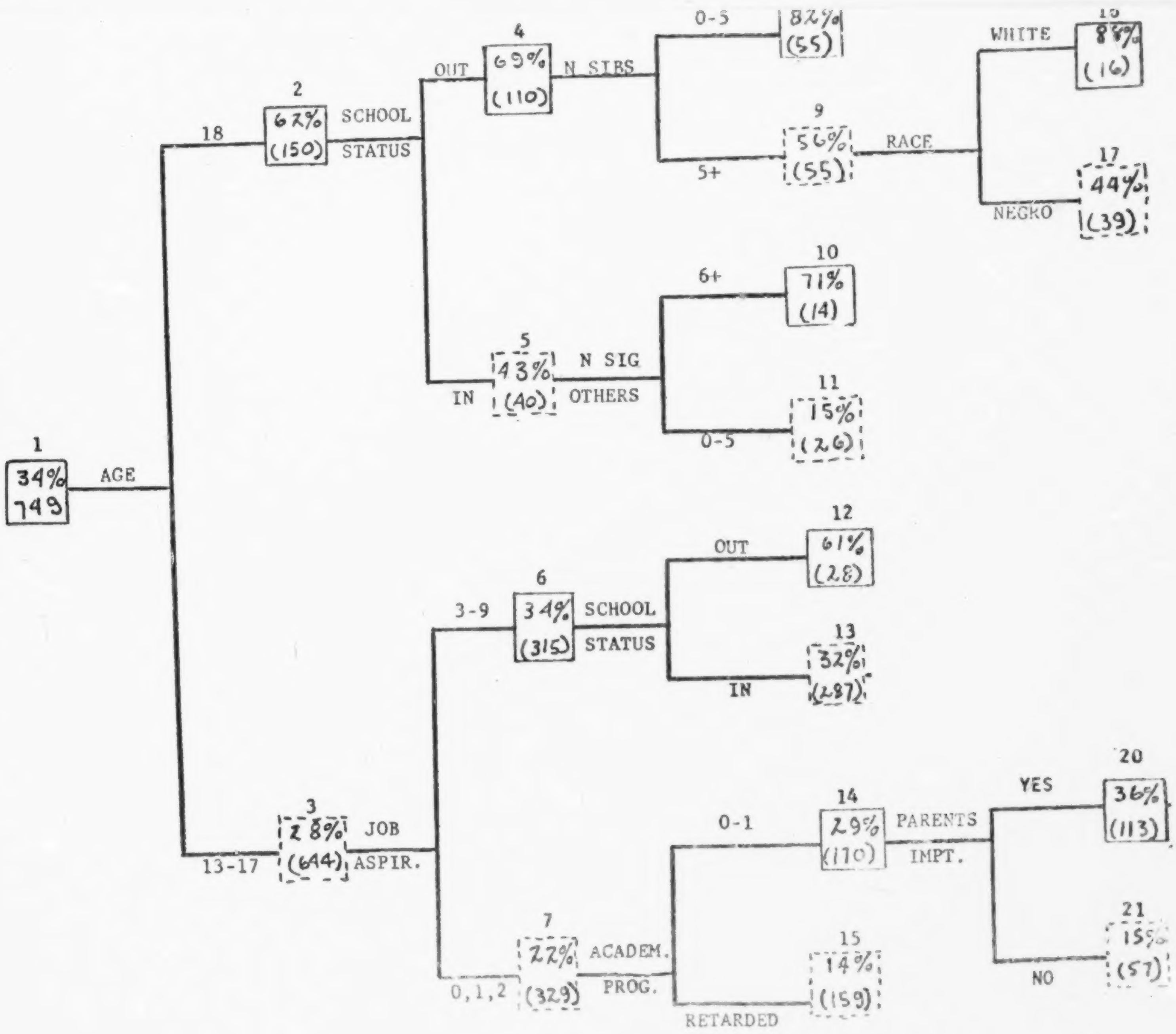
1
34%
749
AGE
18
2
62%
(150)
SCHOOL
STATUS
OUT
4
69%
(110)
N SIBS
0-5
82%
(55)
5+
9
56%
(55)
RACE
WHITE
88%
(16)
NEGRO
17
44%
(39)
IN
5
43%
(40)
N SIG
OTHERS
6+
10
71%
(14)
0-5
11
15%
(26)
13-17
3
28%
(644)
JOB
ASPIR.
3-9
6
34%
(315)
SCHOOL
STATUS
OUT
12
61%
(28)
IN
13
32%
(287)
0,1,2
7
22%
(329)
ACADEM.
PROG.
0-1
14
29%
(110)
PARENTS
IMPT.
YES
20
36%
(113)
NO
21
15%
(57)
RETARDED
15
14%
(159)

FIG. 1 Job holding among 749 inner city males, ages 13-18.

Group 2, as indicated by the value given to the left of the box, contains the eighteen-year-old subjects. The solid lines outlining the box identify it as the subgroup with the higher percentage of employed subjects resulting from the split (62 percent of the 150 eighteen-year-olds are employed). By contrast Group 3, drawn with broken lines to designate the subgroup with the lower percentage of employment resulting from the split on "Age," shows a 27 percent rate of employment for the 418 subjects ranging in age from 13 through 17. The likelihood of employment for Group 3 is about one-half that for Group 2--about the same as the magnitude of difference between the total sample (Group 1) and Group 2.

Having now made the first division of the total sample into high and low employment subsamples, iterative scanning computations are continued to locate subsample division by predictor variables that contain the largest sum of squares until no additional splits reducing the variance by more than 1 percent is possible.

Following out the results from Group 2, the group in which we show the major interest, Figure 1 shows School Status as the most effective predictor variable in distinguishing between employed and unemployed respondents among the subjects. Group 2 split into groups 4 and 5 on the basis of this variable. Group 4 contains subjects who were no longer attending school. Group 5 contains subjects who were still attending school. Sixty-nine percent of those out of school held jobs whereas only 43 percent of those in school (from the same age group, i.e., 18) were employed. We should add here that, although being out of school was the best predictor as to whether a youth was or was not employed, no further distinction by employment level was possible by spliting the group on the basis of why the youths were "out" of school. In addition to the variable "In" or "Out" of school, we also used an additional variable in our analysis which coded the reasons for nonattendance as follows: "Graduated," "pushed out," and "quit." This second variable, i.e., the reason for being out of school, was of no predictive value in distinguishing these youths on the basis of employment. If an eighteen year old youth was no longer attending school, then he was far more likely to be employed than one who was still attending school (69 percent to 43 percent). The high school graduate was no more likely to be employed than those who were expelled or who left voluntarily prior to graduation. More precisely, if there were some employment-related advantages to remaining in school until high school graduation, the advantage is too small to distinguish statistically; such an advantage, if it did in fact exist, could not account for more than 1 percent of the variance and therefore would be of no practical significance.

Further, just as mere school nonattendance is a better predictor of job holding than the particular circumstances under which the subject is out of school, individual differences in "in-school" performance did not relate to employment for those in Group 5. The "in-school" code values contained such information as the subjects academic standing relative to others of the same age, his perceived chances for graduating high school, and deportment. These failed to be of value in differentiating in-school subjects on job holding. The subjects adjustment to the school setting apparently had less effect upon the likelihood of his employment than the mere fact that he was still officially attending school.

Continuing with the out of school eighteen-year-old subjects (following out the highest employment level branch of the multivariate tree), Figure 1 shows that those with under five siblings are more likely to hold jobs than subjects with more than five siblings (Group 8, 82 percent employment; Group 9, 56 percent) This top most branch terminates with Group 8 because no additional "splits" could reduce the variance by at least 1 percent. Additional variance reduction, however, was possible by predictor variable splits off of Group 9, the out of school eighteen-year-olds with more than five siblings. Their employment rate was 56 percent, but by spliting the group on race, a very large difference in employment was shown. Eighty-eight percent of white youths from these larger families were employed (the highest level of employment for any sub-group in Figure 1), while the percentage of Negroes from the same size families (Group 17) was comparatively low--44 percent, or one-half the level of employment shown for comparable white youths. Apparently, coming from a large family acts as a positive motivating force among white youths, but produces an effect in the opposite direction among Negroes--there it acts, for whatever reasons, as an inhibiting force on the prospects for employment.

In brief, the upper, high employment "branch" shows that the likelihood of highest employment is associated with subjects who are: eighteen years of age and out of school; who have more than six siblings, and are white. The significance of this combination is attested to by the fact that 88 percent of subjects possessing these characteristics held jobs at the time of this study. If we ignore racial identity and consider the combined data, then those most likely employed are: eighteen years of age and out of school; and those with less than five siblings.

It is important to note that while JOBS enrollment was included as a variable, it did not produce a significant split. Its effect, if any, was overridden by these largely demographic factors.

Now to continue the multivariate "branch" beginning with the In School eighteen-year-old subjects in Group 5. Respondents who mentioned six or more persons, exluding parents, who they would go to for advice or help (Significant Others) were more likely to hold a job than subjects who named less than six such persons (Group 10 with 71 percent employment versus Group 11 with only 15 percent employment).

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Chapter IV

"Floating" and the Development of Nonstandard Competencies

In previous chapters it has been argued that already established competencies could exert a negative force on employability among youths entering the labor force. Special emphasis was placed on the negative relationship between employment potential and nonstandard competencies that many of the more talented youths learn to master in order to survive the socialization community. It remains to examine for some possible reasons why some youths develop predominantly standard skills and why others develop predominantly nonstandard skills.

We have barely examined the meaning of nonstandard skills and how these local adaptive skill patterns evolve. Important questions are yet to be addressed: How does such learning evolve? What factors are associated with the acquisition of these employment-inhibiting skills? How pervasive are the effects of these factors on other life activities, i.e., are they strictly contextual or do they denote some deeper life-shaping effects on the ability of individuals to link themselves up with the social system of the larger community at points in time beyond the transition-to-work phase? What are the specific situational-centered learning mechanisms involved? What differences are there between skills taught formally to be performed on cue, and informally learned skills whose exercise is required constantly in the routine problem solving struggle to survive life in the socialization community. What underlying structure of regularity is there to these nonstandard skills? Why are nonstandard skills abundant in the behavioral repertoire of some youths and not among others? It is our purpose here to attempt to answer some of these questions pertaining to the origin of these nonstandard skills and their special significance for the individual.

To understand the adverse effects ascribable to preestablished nonstandard competencies on later adjustment to employment we must first distinguish between two types of youths on the basis of their activity patterns. Specifically, we must note the significance of two behavioral archetype identities: "mazeway" youths and "floaters."

By separating CYDP interviews on the basis of the amount of standard and nonstandard skills reported in the "yesterday" activity files, it becomes apparent that some fundamental differences emerge between youths that go beyond the previously discussed differences. Further, the significance of this "archetype" distinction is generic. Not only does it apply to ghetto youths, upon whom we have concentrated our discussion, but the distinction holds a similar importance for youths from other inner-city socialization communities that fell within the sample as well.

As expected, comparisons across black, Mexican, and Italian communities represented by the youths sampled, revealed differences in activities and their spatio-temporal patterning; but, more significant was the identification of a bifurcated behavioral system, or, more accurately, the presence of two distinct behavioral sub-systems in each community. One is a "mazeway" system of logically interconnected activities anchored to the expectations and conventions of the larger society. The other is a "floater" system characterized by loosely integrated activities necessary for social sufficiency and survival in "nonmazeway" activity space, unrelated to the mainstream cultural-economic requirements for satisfactory adjustment. Floaters exhibit greater mastery of "nonmazeway" or nonstandard socialization skills though the goal directedness and predictability of behavior is less during these nonwork, nonschool days. It should be emphasized that the activity patterns that emerge follow the activity conventions of the larger society.

The following are examples of responses to the "yesterday" question which illustrate mazeway type activity patterns.

D. P. - 14 year old Negro

10:30 I got up. I ate breakfast. I cleaned up my room.

11:00 I walked over to a friend's house to see if he was home. He wasn't home. Then I went to Animal Court--played fast pitching with Bruce C. and Louis G. Louis hit a home run and said he would blast another one--and he did. Bruce was talking off the subject--asked me if I was going to summer camp. He asked me what league I would be on if I was going to be on the baseball team. I said Pony League.

1:00 Everything was out of place at home. The exterminators were coming. I helped mom move things and put things back.

1:35 I went out with mother to see a neighbor.

2:00 I went back outside; played baseball. I played on Taylor street in front of my house. I played umpire. Wayne and Gregory were playing. Greg said Wayne would be out in field for lifetime.

3:00 A friend, Arthur, came over with another person. We played baseball. Arthur said let's go to the school playground; this one here is too small. Then I pitched at the school yard. The other pitcher's arms were tired. Arthur asked me what team I was for. I said Los Angeles Angels. He said I should know every player's name if my team was L. A. Angels. Arthur's team won 7-1.

5:30 It was getting dark. I went to Arthur's house. He said he had a stomachache. I wanted to hear an album but he couldn't find it. Art's brother came in and said my mom was looking for me. I ran downstairs. My mom said to hurry home.

8:00 My mom gave me some clean clothes to wear. We both walked down to the police station. We went to a meeting there to discuss problems of neighborhood. One woman said she was afraid to call the police when the teenagers were rowdy because the police go to her house, the teenagers see it, and break her windows the next day.

9:00 A man said he would drive us home. We discussed the meeting. We saw a man walking with a bottle in his hand, drinking--that's the kind of problem we have.

9:30 Got home. Started reading comic books. The lamp socket fell off. I turned off the switch and fixed the wire and then put the socket back and plugged it back in.

10:40 I practiced lesson on guitar. Went to bed and read 2 more comic books--"Barry Goldwater" and "Archie"--classic comic book. Then I went to sleep.

J. S. - 11 year old Negro

7:30 I got up and got dressed. Then I went to the store for my mother--down the arcade, turned at the corner of Madison and Paulina; came back the same way.

8:00 I got back from the store; then I got ready to go to the school. I told her I would be back for lunch.

8:35 Left for school--down the arcade, turned at Paulina, took Paulina to Hermitage and then turned. Then I was at school. I went in, went to my classroom, No. 207. The teacher was there, Mrs. G. sitting down at her desk. I was talking to a girlfriend of mine, Pamela.

9:00 We got ready to go to reading class; I got my reading book, some paper, and my pencil. The bell rang and we went to room 208. The teacher was writing questions on the board. I went to my seat. I was talking to my friend Carl E. about the lesson on the board. He asked me something first; I said I don't know. Then I went back to my work, copying questions off the board. When the class finished, we discussed the story--I forgot.

10:00 I went to spelling. We discussed the story. We wrote the story. I started to talk to a boy friend, Charles W.

11:00 We had English. The teacher was there sitting at her desk. I went to my seat and sat down. She told us to take out our books. I don't remember the whole class.

11:50 We got ready to go to lunch. We got our coats, lined up, and went home. I walked home the same way I went to school; nothing happened, I was alone.

12:15 I ate lunch with my sister and mother. Then I went back to school the same way. I played on the playground until the bell rang. I fooled around with Carl E. and Charles W. We lined up and went inside the school.

1:00 I went to my room; the teacher was there waiting until everybody got in class. At the door we put our coats up and sat down. We had arithmetic problems on the board. I took out some paper and started doing the problems until we had science. We had the same teacher. We read from our books and she asked some people questions--I wasn't asked. We did that until it was about time to go home. We put our books up; she gave us our homework which was to finish reading our science; that's all.

3:15 I left school with some friends, Carl and Charles. We talked about what we were going to do after we got home. I went back over to Broun and played on the playground. That's about all. I walked the same way.

3:45 I got home, took off my school clothes. My mother and little sister told me to change clothes; I did. I ate a sandwich and went back outside and waited for my friends to come--Carl and Charles. We went back to school the same way. We talked about what we were going to do after we got there: play basketball and mess around. That's all.

6:00 I came back home the same way. They went home, too. They said they would see me tomorrow. I said okay. I ate dinner with my 4 sisters. My mother didn't eat. She told me to clean up my dishes when I was finished. After that I watched T.V. for a long time.

9:00 At 9:30 I went to bed.

Youths who exhibit this type of activity fully subscribe to and abide by the conventional norms and are generally viewed as the "good" boys in the community. Whether or not their work and school related skills actually lead to success or not may be of less importance than the belief that they do. Even if they themselves are not directly transferable, or useful in conventional achievement tasks, these skills will not interfere with the acquisition of successful behaviors later on. Further, those who, for whatever reason, concentrate their energies on the development of mazeway skills are less likely to acquire nonmazeway skills that could act as competing competencies--and, in the long run, might be a greater handicap to conventional adjustment than simply the presence or absence of these mazeway skills whose instrumental success value is accepted on faith alone. At worst, these mazeway competencies might be irrelevant to later adjustment, at best they might have some positive trans-situational relevance.

We can think in terms of three types of socialization competencies or skills that have employment relevance; they are: (a) transferable, (b) irrelevant, and (c) competing competencies. While we will go into a detailed analysis of their importance in the chapter to follow, it will be useful to briefly describe and illustrate these skills for the sake of the present discussion.

Transferable These competencies have a functional importance to employment. They are acquired during socialization and ensure greater effectiveness when eventually employment is taken up. Examples could be illustrated by a youth who learned mechanic skills by tinkering with cars and later in life became an auto mechanic. Such skills facilitate success in the job market and, in that sense have positive trans-situational relevance.

Irrelevant These competencies (standard as well as nonstandard) are unrelated to success in employment, they are neither positive or negative in their transfer relevance. Many hobbies, e.g., coin collecting, playing a musical instrument, athletic abilities, are of this sort. Indeed, such skills *could* have positive transfer to many vocations. On the other hand, most often they represent skills that *do not help* a person in meeting the requirements of his job and they also *do not interfere with his success on* the job--they are not so important in relation to his total repertoire of skills that not being able to perform them would result in a serious blow to his self-image, intrinsic sense of competence, etc. It is probable that many of the mazeway skills, particularly those gained through formal education, fall into this category--they have only limited or no functional value in the employment setting. Footnote 1 in Chapter 2 on employment shows that graduating high school (viz. being pushed-out or quitting voluntarily) does not enhance the prospects of employment. Others, e.g., Bachman (1972), report similar results based on a nationwide longitudinal sample of youths.

Competing competencies These are competencies acquired during socialization that are negatively related to employment. They have negative transsituational relevance. They inhibit rather than facilitate adjustment in the work setting. These competencies, and their effects, are described in Chapter 1. Essentially, they are the "street" or nonstandard competencies in which "floaters" develop almost exclusive expertise, but, by contrast, are less frequently found among mazeway youths and if found, are of less importance with respect to their place in terms of the total repertoire of competencies. Thus, a mazeway youth has a good chance for successful adjustment to the adult world outside the socialization community for two reasons: (1) even if his mazeway skills prove unrelated to the requirements of conventional employment, by virtue of the fact that he is low on nonstandard competencies, there is no interference of a competing competency nature to hamper or interfere with the acquisition of employment relevant skills. For such youths, success in meeting the demands of employment may not then be so much a function of the skills presumed to have future achievement relatedness, but a function of skills not acquired, i.e., nonacquisition of nonstandard skills that might have become competing competencies. (2) The importance of mazeway skills for future success may be more than merely a functional myth. They may indeed have a positive transfer value to the practical requirements of the employment setting.

The mazeway boy then is an achievement imitator. If he survives the combined onslaught of those conventional institutions that inexorably shape behavior--the home, the school, and church--he is rewarded with a life in the mazeway equilibrium trap. Under these conditions, changes in an individual throughout his life will be indistinguishable from those of the larger society of which he is a part.

Approximately ten percent of the youths in our sample adhere rather rigidly to a behavior pattern that follows the mazeway template. Another 25 to 30 percent show activity patterns that are predominantly mazeway in nature. Thus, approximately 40 percent of our sample exhibit a predominantly mazeway activity pattern. These are the youths who make up categories 1 and 2 in Table 2, Chapter 2.

Floating behavior

The second activity system to emerge during the analysis of the activity profiles of youths pertains to those respondents with a predominance of "nonstandard" activities. This activity system is characterized by a set of predominantly "nonstandard" activities, loosely integrated by unroutinized "search" behaviors which may be described as "floating." Whereas the behavioral sequences in the activity profiles of the mazeway youths were predictable because they were planfully anchored around conventionally prescribed activity expectations, there was often no predictability or logical continuity from one activity to another during the day of the floater. Their activities form, at best, a loosely integrated network of behaviors that are not predictably related either to each other or to some long term goal.

As the name implies, this unpredictable pattern appears largely dependent upon the occurrence of adventitious and unpredictable external events rather than on some planned ordering of means-ends related activities and time budgeting. These youths, however, should not be thought of as unskilled or less active than mazeway youths. They exhibit some rather extraordinary skill accomplishments in "face games," and irregular income acquisition activities, i.e., hustling. These skills of the floater are the social sufficiency skills necessary to survive in what may be thought of as "nonmazeway" space, i.e., they are functional competencies for those who, for whatever reasons, find themselves excluded from the mainstream cultural economic pathways. The following are examples of floating behavior as evidenced in the response to the "yesterday" item.

R. A. - 15 year old Mexican-American

10:30 I got up at home, had breakfast with the family. We talked about getting work done in the house. I was fooling around with my 15-year old brother, Jessie, and talking about girls.

12:00 Went outside onto the front stoop and talked to a few of my friends abcut what happened the night before with the Sharks. Then we decided to play baseball and I went in the house to get a bat and ball. Then we went to the playground on Polk and Garibaldi. Poppy, Mario, and Fatman and me played baseball there and we played until we just called each other names and goofed around (no real topic of conversation).

1:30 We came back to the house and stood out here (front of house). Mostly we talked about the Sharks and what we did and what we might do that night.

3:00 We met some guy who gave us a lift to 22nd and Ashland. Then we took the bus to Pulaski; then Alfred went into work at Woolworths and me and Steve stayed outside and walked around for about 1-1/2 hours, and we talked about how you hardly see any Mexicans around in that area; it's mostly Polak. Then we met some girl on the street and she asked about our Artistic sweater and she asked if it was a Shark sweater and we asked her how she knew about the Sharks. And she said her girlfriend's brother was in the Sharks. Then we said "there ain't nothin' left of the Sharks--we took care of 'em yesterday." Then we walked into some bowling alley thinking they had several pool tables. Turned out there was only one and all the boys was looking at us so we turned around and walked out. Then we walked around looking at girls. Then we stopped for about 1/2 hour at an empty newspaper stand and we talked about how Steve got his drivers' license. He said it was hard at first and he told we all the main points of what to do and what not to do. Then we walked for some more and didn't say much--just looked around.

5:30 Then Alfred came out of work and we took the bus back home and we told him what we did.

6:00 We came back to Polk and Laflin and fooled around with the guys when you interviewers were here.

6:15 Went inside and ate with the family. We talked about what was going on outside (that I was interviewing some of the Artistics), then I watched T.V. with my mother and sisters. There was no talk; we have to keep silent to watch T.V.

7:15 Stopped watching T.V.. Came outside and listened a bit to the interview. Then I went over to the corner and talked to the teen challenge guy. He was telling us to go to see a play on Friday with x-drug addicts. Then we came back to the stoop and started calling each other names and fooling around. Then Marty Dunn came in the stationwagon. He told us six Sharks were at the Boys Club for a meeting and we told him we wanted the six main guys, not the ones that were there. Then he tried to arrange it, but he couldn't and told us he'd make it Thursday for a bigger meeting with the six guys they wanted, and the six guys we wanted. He said we could have a small meeting with six of us; we said we wanted all nine of us to go, and three would wait outside. He said there might be trouble, so three of us stayed here and he took six guys to the club. I stayed here and a few (3) more Artistics guys came over and the six of us talked about what was gonna happen at the meeting.

8:30 Four of the boys left. Then a minute later one of the Artistics of the meeting ran back and told us the Sharks had outside the Boys Club some guys waiting to beat up our six guys. Then we called back the four boys that left, then the 7 of us ran back to the Boys Club. We went into some hallway in the projects across the street from the Boys Club and waited patiently to see what would happen.

9:00 The Sharks' group came out of the meeting first and saw us and they ran into Flint's stationwagon. Then when they left we went into the Boys Club and waited for our guys that were at the meeting.

9:30 Marty Dann drove us home in the stationwagon. He told us that we were gonna meet again on Thursday and have a trial about what happened Tuesday night.

9:35 When I got dropped off, I went in the house and took off my coat and hat and sat down and watched T.V.

10:00 I went to bed.

12:30 The police came asking for Bug and Ricco. They said that my house was a club house for the Artistics. My father said you want to come in and find out. So they came in. Then they shined a light on my brother Jessie's face and woke him up. They said we can't prove nuthin, but don't let us see any Artistics hanging around here. Then they left and my father and mother came and woke me up and asked me if there had been any trouble with Bug and Ricco during the day. I said no. Then I went back to sleep.

W. C. - 16 year old Negro

7:30 I got up. I ate breakfast with the whole family. We talked about tryin' to find a job--be glad when I could find me a job, earn me some money, and get my own apartment.

10:30 I listened to the radio, alone. I left home and went to a pool room--Roosevelt. I saw Alan, John, and Tommy. We started discussin pool--make all shots, you call, put right "English" on the ball. We shot a couple games and stayed around the pool room and talked about girls--sexual relationships, how do you catch V.D., how some people take care of themselves and others don't and get V.D. Then I saw Mike, R . Conversation: "What's happenin? " "Ain't nothin to it, Willie."

2:30 Went to Roberts, alone. Sat around, played cards. Him and his girl friend were drinkin beer. What are we goin' to do on holiday (Memorial Day). We discussed places to go: out of town, park or beach. We listened to records and were plannin' on givin' a party. Said it would probably be middle of next month before we give party that we're planning. That's about it.

6:00 Came home, walked alone. My mom and kid brothers were around. Wanted to know what I was gonna be doin' tonight. We were hittin' each other on shoulder. We watched T.V., Hollywood A-go-go. A funny record came on--we laughed--didn't like it. That's about all.

9:30 Went to bed.

The important distinction being made here is not only between "mazeway" and "nonmazeway" youths, but involves, also, a second distinction between two types of nonmazeway youths; namely, nonmazeway floaters and nonmazeway youths with well routinized "nonstandard" activity patterns. These latter youths are those who are outside of the mazeways but who do not float adrift looking for things to do. Unlike the floaters, their activities are highly structured and they have an acute awareness of time budgeting, and exhibit systematically and logically related activities series. Those in the criminal mazeways may be the best example of such youths: they show the same habits as do the conventional mazeway youths, the only difference is that their activities are exclusively or predominantly illegal or quasi-legal. Full time hustlers represent another example. While outside the conventional mazeways, their activities are planned and logically related. By contrast, the floaters are younger, not as goal oriented (although, at times of crisis they may be) as other nonmazeway youths with routinized activity patterns. Among the nonmazeway youths our interest is in the floaters, and it is the activities and pseudo-activities which we have discussed and will devote our attention to in subsequent discussion. They interest us for two reasons.

First, floaters make up the largest percent of nonmazeway youths, i.e., among the nonmazeway youths, floaters far out number those in the criminal mazeway. Floating was noted in about one half of activity reports; it was the prevalent activity for approximately 25 percent of the sample. That means that for at least one quarter of the youths living in these areas, the primary determinant of their activities depended upon the activity opportunities that presented themselves during the course of floating. (About 50 percent of those boys whom we interviewed evidenced a balanced degree of internal and external dependency for direction in the final determination of their behavior. Their behavior was, in part, mazeway determined and, in part, determined by individual needs. These internally directed behaviors might have been in conflict with the mazeways, but seldom were they goal-less. For example, a boy might skip school to do something, i.e., to go swimming, to earn extra money on a part time job, etc., but in contrast with floaters, seldom would such a boy skip school simply to hang around and do nothing; and in contrast with mazeway boys, seldom was such a boy so chained to the conventional dictates that he would be prevented from acting out on his own.)

Second, floating is important because it is the primary means by which nonstandard skills, one subclass of which are competing competencies, are acquired. Competing competencies, of course, are of major interest because they, unlike Irrelevant and Transferable Competencies, are negatively related to satisfactory adjustment in the employment setting.

Figure 1 provides a general overview of this behavior causation model, particularly the development of particular competencies. The purpose of this figure, and much of the subsequent discussion, is to provide some idea of the total developmental sequence which gives rise to a style of life and its consequences, i.e., floating, whereby youths depend upon the immediate events in their environment, especially the easy-entry, adventitious as

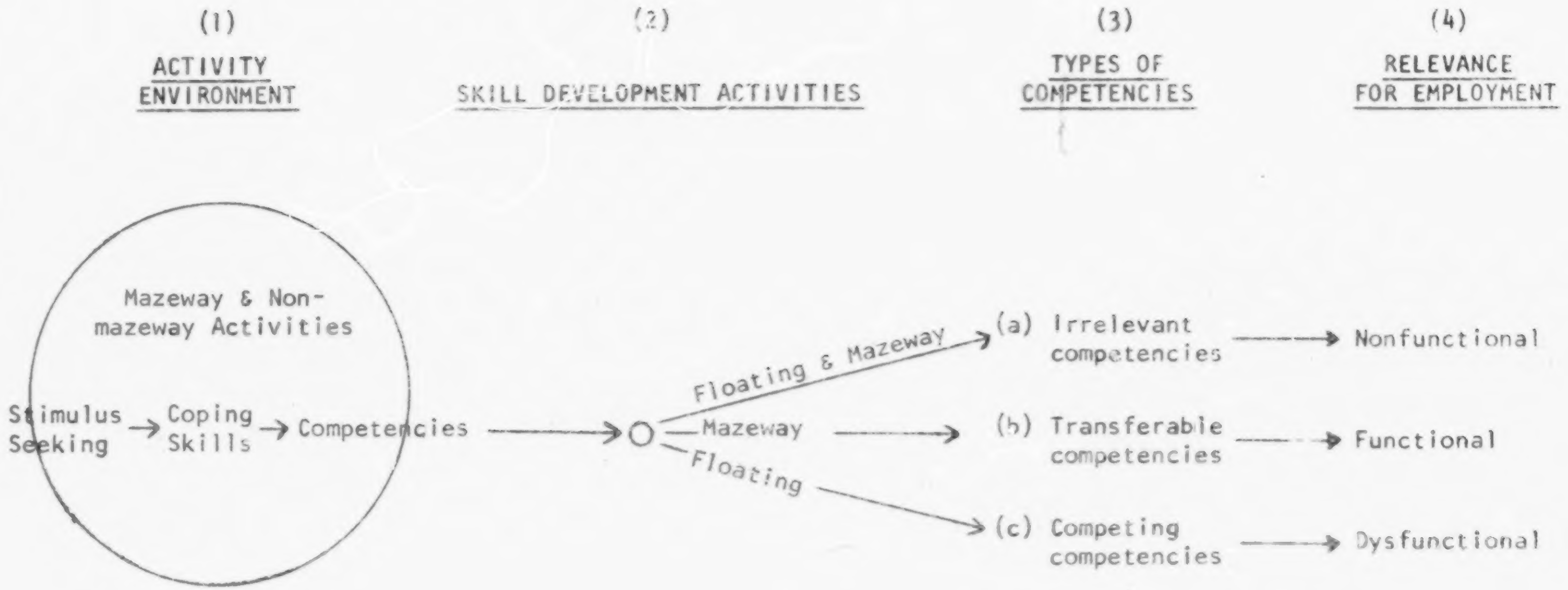
(1)
ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENT
(2)
SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
(3)
TYPES OF COMPETENCIES
(4)
RELEVANCE FOR EMPLOYMENT
Mazeway & Non-mazeway Activities
Stimulus Seeking
Coping Skills
Competencies
Floating & Mazeway
Mazeway
Floating
(a) Irrelevant competencies
(b) Transferable competencies
(c) Competing competencies
Nonfunctional
Functional
Dysfunctional

Figure 3

opposed to the regulated mazeway events, to give them a blueprint for action and the development of competing competencies as a consequence of those actions.

Under (1) in Figure 3 is the Activity Environment. The circle encompases opportunities for: (a) learning of social sufficiency and survival competencies and (b) situational implementation of these competencies in the activity environment of the socialization or subcultural community. Our main concern in this report is with the differential consequences of various activity environments for adjustment to situations outside the socialization community; more specifically, the transfer value of competencies acquired in the socialization community to the employment setting. As shown in Figure 3, however, there is concern also with the factors within the activity environment of the socialization community which foster floating. If the neighborhood activity environment in which a boy finds himself is characterized by structured activity requirements inappropriate to the boy's capacities, or if such activities are prohibitive in the sense that they are not easily accessible to him, then, in such a case, the environment fosters floating among boys. Thus two ingredients appear important to the onset and development of floating. They are: (1) the degree of willingness of the boy to meet the requirements for and to participate in the formal or institutionalized activities designed for his age group, and (2) the ability of society to assimilate and provide substitute activities acceptable to boys who do not participate wholeheartedly in these socially prescribed activities. These factors that go together to determine floating behavior will be treated in greater detail later in this chapter.

Shown under (2) in Figure 3 are the two major types of skill development activities that eventuate in the development of competencies. (Competency and skill are close but not identical in their connotation. Skills is a word of lesser "power," referring to activities that a person learns to perform. Competencies refers to those activities or skills which a person can perform at a higher level of qualification or sufficiency than would be required to be considered necessary for the act to represent a skill. Further, as will be discussed later with respect to the work of White, competency is used here to connote something of greater motivational and self-esteem significance than one normally associates with "skills.")

In terms of their relation to the three types of competencies (3), either floating or mazeway activities may lead to irrelevant competencies; in general, mazeway activities lead to transferable competencies--indeed some nonstandard skills may be channeled so as to lead to conventional achievements, but, in the main, mazeway activities are the surest route to the acquisition of skills that will have positive transfer to job market requirements. By contrast, floating is, while perhaps not exclusively, the most likely way to acquire competing competencies. These different types of competencies as represented in the activity protocols of mazeway boys and floaters are shown in Table 3. Since differences in the amount of "Irrelevant competencies" (77 percent mazeway vs. 60 percent floaters) are of no significance, the significance of the activity data rests in the differing degrees of competing competencies (3 percent mazeway vs. 30 percent floater).

Table 3

Distribution of competencies and their possible relevance for employment among mazeway boys and floaters*

	Mazeway Boys		Floaters	
Irrelevant Competencies	High	77%	High	60%
Transferable Competencies	Some	20%	Few	20%
Competing Competencies	None	4%	Some-many	20%
		100%		100%

*That is to say, given the typical activity protocol for youths in each of these two activity type classifications, one can expect the identifiable competencies to be distributed as shown. These figures are "estimated" in the sense that we have no hard data on the actual transfer value of different competencies to the employment setting. The three different "Competency" categories are, however, based on activities that are discernably different, based on the activity codings procedures discussed in the text. The data shown there are based on the activity reports of 110 most "typical" mazeway boys and 100 most "typical" floaters. The greatest variation occurred in the Competing Competencies category for the floaters (some-many), where the percent figure across respondents ranged from as low as ten to as high as eighty. Otherwise, the distribution of competencies were remarkably stable among the youths represented in the two activity classifications.

The general framework and significance of these floater-related issues are as follows: (1) floaters are youths who, for a variety of reasons, become excluded from the mazeway activity "space" with its opportunity ties for the "mazeway" behavior development; (2) because the society does not provide substitute activities to youths who do not participate wholeheartedly in the prescribed mazeway activities, they are left with nothing to do--in a world where to do nothing is to be nothing; (3) as a straightforward reaction to serious environmentally imposed restrictions, they set out to search on their own for something to do in the activity space between the protected mazeways to create or find activities, i.e., they "float" in the furtive hope to establish an identity and to avoid boredom by developing competencies, competency development conditioned by activity opportunities in the activity environment outside the established mazeways; (4) floating leads almost exclusively to the development of nonstandard competencies, i.e., competencies necessary for social sufficiency and survival in the nonmazeway environment of the socialization community; (5) in turn, the development of nonstandard competencies can prevent "reentry" into the mazeway activity, thus precluding the possibility of successful adjustment to the requirements of the wider community if and when such opportunities present themselves--the reason being that nonstandard competencies, depending on their importance to the individual, may act as competing competencies in the way described earlier. Let us now examine this mazeway expulsion→floating→nonstandard competency development→unsuccessful mazeway reentry sequence.

Some characteristics of floaters

Boys reporting floating behavior appeared to spend a great deal of time, sometimes an entire day, without being able to consciously anticipate what they would do next or where their activities would lead them. They spoke of "hanging around," "messing around," "roaming," and so forth. When asked to give a more definite description of their behavior they indicated that they were looking or waiting for something to do. Beyond this, they appeared to be at a loss to explain or to account for how they spent much of their time. Thus, the chief characteristics of the floater behavior were the qualities of searching, improvising, and trial and error randomness which served as linking behaviors between the environmentally determined adventitious events and circumstances that provided opportunities to "do something."

While floating was most frequently reported as an activity in the open community, it also arose in contexts other than when a boy has mobility and freedom. It occurred when a boy's physical presence was required for some formal purpose which no longer interested him, such as school or employment. For example, although many of the boys in the sample labeled "floaters" attended school, only on rare occasions were they engaged in activities even remotely related to academic concerns. When no longer interested in either classroom instruction or job duties, these youths appear to search for, and engage in, activities that went on parallel to, and often in conflit with, those activities for which their presence was formally required.

"Cutting loose" and the onset of "floating"

The onset of floating is usually gradual and, for no simple and all encompassing reason, even before it becomes an identifiable form of behavior, the boy usually has a history of alienation from, and conflict with a number of institutional forms of control so that the family controls become ineffectual. Such a separation from conventional sources of social control not only makes it possible to have free time for floating but produces consequences for succeeding behavior.

To what degree they exclude themselves and to what degree they are excluded from serious and responsible participation in mazeway activities is hard to say. The process is probably reciprocal. More specifically, among certain youths, there is a continual reciprocal process of rejection and counter-rejection which progressively and systematically eliminates conventional action alternatives until there is finally no place for them in society other than non-mazeway space. There is nothing that they are psychologically willing, able, or legally permitted to do; they find themselves outside of the mazeway activity environment where all they can do is to do nothing.

Thus, for the floater, nonconformity is withdrawal (or exclusion) from the socially prescribed activity. "Cutting loose," however, does not mean being able to do what one pleases.

While the restricted activity of any "disadvantaged" environment may cause problems to adolescents in general, it is especially so for youths who choose not to follow the prescribed activities and "cut loose" with those who have plenty of free time to do as they please. It would seem at first that the time, and being unencumbered by the severe restrictions imposed upon their activity freedom, that they should enjoy themselves and find pleasure in either doing nothing or finding gratifying things to do. Yet this is not so, for the activities of mazeway youths are limited, and they find themselves even further restricted, paradoxically, by a lot of free time to fill and nothing to do. For those who are intellectually resourceful and psychologically strong the experience could be rewarding. Undoubtedly some who have such advantages do, indeed, rise above the inconveniences of low income, incompleted education, and the like, and become something; such youths may even find in such hardships a source of strength. Not all, however, are so fortunate; in fact, few can live outside the confines of the mazeways and survive without suffering at serious personal cost. The typical inner-city adolescent soon finds that he cannot make the most of it; in fact, his actions often lead to further activity restrictions until he literally has nothing to do which becomes positively defined. On the surface, what appears to be a cut loose, free and independent status, often turns out to be a psychological nightmare.

Once cut loose from conventional mazeway activities, youths find themselves faced with the problem of keeping busy. While, for whatever reasons, they may find relief from not being anchored to the mazeway activities, they soon find that they cannot simply "do nothing" for protracted periods of time; the internal stress is too great to allow it. Because these boys operate outside the culturally designated mazeways, they have no recognized place in society and are not provided with the opportunities for activities which would enable them to gain the experience they hope for. In fact, the intra-psychic, inter-personal and social consequences of floating eventuate in a continual delimiting of activities for the boy until he is faced with what may best be described as "activity-deprivation." The floater is attempting to cope with an activity-deprivation situation which threatens not only his sense of social sufficiency but his psychological state as well.

Activity deprivation

Boys who find themselves in such circumstances for prolonged periods of time welcome almost any form of activity which offers a means of avoiding the stress of activity deprivation. Under these conditions they appear particularly susceptible to activity possibilities which are mutually reinforcing. Almost any hint or suggestion may be the catalyst which helps to precipitate a collective definition of the situation. Even a joke, a funny story or a stray rumor may serve this end. Hence, what might have started as an attempt to be funny may end by being taken in all seriousness. Where one boy sought only to amuse the others by some outrageous comment, the others may do him one better and actually commit an outrage. Thus, what started in innocence may often culminate in some form of misbehavior that each boy personally regrets. Yet, not knowing exactly what is appropriate to the situation, most of the boys blot out other concerns and "go along," taking a role similar to what others are already enacting or suggesting.

Ferenczi, in 1918, wrote an article entitled "Sunday Neurotics" in which he described how people often break emotionally when faced with a large block of uncommitted time such as weekends and vacations. Even becoming ill is often welcome as a means to escape the pathology of boredom.

The Sunday Neurotic phenomenon is not limited to people that are mentally unstable; a large block of time and the absence of prescribed activities to fill it can threaten the stability of even the most mentally sound person. Eisenberg (1947) and Slote (1969) have shown that forced unemployment (prolonged strike, factory shutdown) results in serious depression, a striking rise in suicide rate, and serious psychosomatic disturbance for those laid off for protracted periods. These men pre-occupy themselves with "finding something to do,"--Slote's data suggests that becoming ill is not an infrequent solution. It is known that men become mentally unbalanced in situations where there is no social isolation, no stimulus deprivation, but nothing to do. Antarctic explorers as well as the men stationed there find the limited availability of activities to be almost unbearable, and at best endurable only for relatively short durations. Admiral Byrd (1938), in his biography as well as a number of studies conducted for the Navy, illustrates the profound effects of such stress. In common parlance, men (and women, particularly middle aged housewives after the children marry) often go "stir" crazy when they are faced with a large block of time and absence of activities to fill it; we have used the term "activity deprivation" to describe the state of affairs. "Activity deprivation" is used here to describe the external condition, i.e., prolonged inaction (real or perceived) and not the internal stress and impairment of mental functions that ensues. Unlike boredom, the individual here is willing and desirous of activity but there is nothing that he can do because either he has been excluded from participation in sanctioned activities or is unwilling or unable to act.

In a free society, there is probably less freedom to choose action possibility among adolescents than anywhere else in the population. Adolescent youths of school age are exposed to what may be called a restricted activity environment. The activities available are highly prescribed and few. They are expected to find activity that prepares them for the future responsibilities of adulthood--preferably school, but if not school, a poor second, but nevertheless acceptable choice, would be employment. If a youth activity pattern is anchored around school o, work then at least some disruptive, recreational activity and even some antisocial behavior will be tolerated, so long as the main activity pattern remains in the prescribed cultural mazeways.

Deprivation, activity deprivation, however, at first glance seems too strong a word to apply to youths and their situation. But, they more than any other population segment of society, other than perhaps middle aged, middle class housewives after their children move away, are constantly faced with the problem of having a large block of unstructured time with nothing to do, and, in consequence, a volatile period at the height of their physical and intellectual capacity, under a state of tremendous tension.

Invariably, when a youth approaches a group of youths hanging on a corner he asks "what's happening?" and the members invariably reply "nothing." This greeting and its reply go on thousands of times each day in thousands of such situations; what's happening? Nothing. As a manifest referent, the most obvious symptom in language of the activity deprivation condition on the social scene.

There is little space for youths in society today--almost no alternative courses of action other than those defined by the conventional pathways, school and work, that make up the narrowly defined cultural mazeways youths must follow to adulthood, regardless of their inclinations and opportunities. Inner-city youths are forced upon a middle class, Procrustean bed of education and work notions, and when there is some lack of fit, these youths are forced to size by a variety of negative sanctions.

Floating and competency

The contention here that because one way of solving the problem of what to do with nonconforming young people is by not permitting them anything to do, such youths are continually forced with avoiding the stress of "keeping busy." For them finding or even creating something to do is essential to maintaining mental health, self-esteem. Finding something to do, anything to do, is the only way great mental stress can be avoided. To avoid this stress of activity deprivation, these "outsiders" often ban together and then search for, i.e., "float," or create among themselves nonstandard activities that will serve for them the same functions that socially approved activities serve for the more conforming youths. Whatever bad one might say about the relevancy of the prolonged tutelage of the mazeway youths, at least it protects them from such stress and, in turn, the difficult task of creating alternative competencies.

Thus, in addition to the reduction of stress by keeping busy, the floater is involved in this alternative channeling of interest and energy to nonstandard activities that may salvage his self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Not only is the floater motivated to find things to do, he is also interested and needs to find or create activities that will provide him with a feeling of competence. In view of the minimal activity opportunities and scant extrinsic rewards, the feeling of competence, i.e., the intrinsic reward of mastering skills, becomes all the more important.

Perhaps it might be argued that youths outside the mazeways will value competencies more in terms of their intrinsic worth than those within the mazeways. Mazeway skills are not intrinsically rewarding as nonstandard skills. There is no need for them to be intrinsically rewarding since their value lies in their instrumental value: they supposedly lead to the achievement of conventional goals, and it is the goal that is the reward not the behavior that makes the achievement of the goal possible. Conversely, for the floater, the activity in which he engages is not likely to carry with it the promise of some long term goal. He becomes good in nonstandard activities for the feeling of mastery, the feeling of competency in its own right. Thus, the floater probably has a stronger sense of the self-as-behavior, and is more attached to that sense of self, than is the mazeway boy.

The position with respect to the significance of a sense of competence and its relation to self-esteem is in accord with that of Robert White. Robert White, in a series of essays (1959), (1960), (1963), reviewed a variety of such animal and human research and concluded that these activities could be explained by postulating an independent ego energy which he calls a drive toward "competency." Although somewhat of an over simplification, White's idea of competency is equivalent to "doing a thing well." He argues that this need as a motivating force is as important and as biologically rooted as those other such needs, e.g., sex, aggression. That the need to do something well is so basic and important that people are driven to create and to participate in activities solely for their satisfaction. Smith (1968), after reviewing the whole terrain of literature on competence, has developed the notion of the "competent self." He considers competence as central to the development of healthy self-concept and argues that the socialization of competence should be the major societal objective.

The sense of competence defined by White (1963) as the "cumulative result of the whole history of transactions with the environment...In the mature adult the sense of competence may become well organized and differentiated with respect to different spheres of activity. We learn what we can and cannot do, and we may be satisfied to concentrate on the former (p. 39)." According to White, an individual's feelings of self-esteem emerge from the sense of competence. "Just as esteem for another person is based on what he can do, self-esteem is based on a sense of what I can do (p. 132)."

While the floater defiantly sets out on his own to establish an adjustment along dimensions which are his own substitute for those exhorted by the conventional dictates that convey the pro-social rules of behavior for more compliant boys, the floater is not necessarily anti-social in his adjustment orientation, but rather asocial. He chooses to dismiss social dictates and preachments, and become omni-directional in his approach to a world of objects and events which he decides to regard as having equal valence. Thus, by momentarily setting aside internalized and socially prescribed forms of restraint and guidance, the floater is able to increase his freedom of movement and to broaden the potential sources of environmental events to which he may not respond. In short, there is no reason to believe that floating is the consequence of a personality disorder, but rather it represents a type of response set characterized by a high degree of situational dependency. Along with the mazeway boys, floaters share a strong need for external or environmental props to provide them with self-definition. Like the floater, the mazeway boy is equally dependent upon the environment for self-definition, and a chain of circumstances and events that will fasten him to a larger social unit, but unlike the floater, he adopts social conformity as a means of gaining the necessary environmental supports. By contrast, and largely out of necessity, the floater searches for adventitious events and activities allowable in nonmazeway space. Neither appears to be willing or able to rely exclusively upon internal resources for self-definition and direction.

Floating, then, results from a breakdown of meaningful connection between the boy and the mazeway activity environment. Youths finding themselves in a non-mazeway environment soon learn that society does not provide substitute activities to boys who do not participate wholeheartedly in the socially prescribed mazeway activities; and, that, if they are to avoid boredom and establish an identity they must either reenter the mazeway or find alternative things to do: "floating" becomes his means for finding things to do--a means to seek out activities that may meaningfully relate him to the larger community and provide him with a valued sense of self-identity. But it is a furtive search that must go on in the ill-defined no-man's land that lies between the protected mazeways of conventional society: to the boy, floating is a way of finding something to do; to the community, at worst, it is viewed negatively as looking for trouble; at best, it is viewed a purposeless behavior.

Floating and the development of nonstandard skills

Floaters are our major concern because their life activities go on in "activity" space where competencies are acquired that neither enable them to reenter the mazeway paths nor to find substitute paths that will later lead to the same goals. The only skill development that can occur is in the area of nonstandard activities and, if our analysis is correct, successful adaptation to life outside of the conventional mazeways, i.e., in "nonmazeway space," through the mastery of these nonstandard indigenous competencies may later constitute a serious drawback to those who later reach for conventional success.

At first they engage in what may be called "pseudo activities"-- the active searching for something to do itself being the best example of a pseudo activity. Typically, this searching behavior, interspersed by periods of aimless floating around or simply "hanging" at street corners fails to provide satisfying activities and release from the tension of boredom and inactivity.

The activity protocols show that floaters may travel as much as five miles or more in a single day; but, what is surprising is that they will seldom travel very far, perhaps no more than a three to four block radius: while floaters are continuously on the move, they do not move very far. Thus, the activities that they happen upon within a relatively limited geographic area determine what skills they acquire.

The range of activity possibilities (i.e., the activity environment) in a given community is always limited. Just as the behavior of the more conventional boy is limited by family training practices, the school which he attends and the more structured recreational facilities where he meets his friends and pursues his leisure time activities, so the floater finds his environment to be a limiting factor. The environmental limits of the floater, however, tend to be the limits set for adults in public and quasi-public places and some of these are illegal, by definition, in relation to children. Thus, a young boy roaming in the streets during school hours, or after curfew time comes to experience some environmental limits that define him as delinquent. Similarly, if the behavior, e.g., noise, "body-punching," or flirtations with girls, for a group of boys who are "just hanging around" exceeds some adults' tolerance limits, then the community tries to enforce conformity on them by calling the police.

Having become alienated from some forms of socially institutionalized activities, through counter rejection, the boy typically begins to avoid those conventional sources of education, recreation, and employment for which he would otherwise be eligible. He soon begins to view floating as no longer a way of wasting time, but as a form of justifiable activity, convincing himself that floating and the diffuse activities that it leads to are acceptable substitutes for the pro-social mazeway dimensions adopted by more compliant youths. Moreover, he seeks out floating companions who band together and through social comparison reaffirm and support the belief that only they "know the score" and that those youths who follow the mazeways are "squares." They also become progressively more committed to floating and adventitious, pseudo-achievement nonmazeway activities as substitute satisfactions for the conventionally defined adolescent avenues for achievement.

Thus, the floater does not often find himself in situations where conventional behavior standards are required or are even necessarily applicable. Most of the floaters studied have neither rejected nor reversed the norms of conventional behavior. Instead, it would appear that these boys, at worst, are indifferent to the conventional normative structure. Floaters can quickly restore and demonstrate behavioral controls and socially approved value judgments to a surprising degree when the situation calls for it. Actually, there are many instances where these boys show considerable respect for conventional means and goals, which would certainly indicate that they usually appreciate the value of an education, a good job, a marriage and patriotism. In large part, however, these goals and means are relevant only if one is involved in some structured activity, social establishment, or other institutionalized mazeway setting. For boys outside these confines, the culturally given mazeway or guidelines which bridge childhood to adulthood may be either indeterminant or provide no reasonable possibility for achieving a socially valued identity. The floater, however, operates outside these mazeways, and it is there that he develops his competencies which are later either irrelevant or dysfunctional if he tries to reenter the world of conventional employment.

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Chapter V

The Theory and Its Implications

Let us attempt to broaden the ideas about competency and motivation beyond the narrow limits of the single case example and amplify on the theoretical position and its ramification in broader perspective. The following is a statement of the theoretical position, but in general form and still containing a number of unexamined motivational assumptions. The competing competency theory and its consequence for adjustment may be put in capsule form as follows:

> To feel competent in doing things well is an important aspect of human adjustment. Much of our behavior is directed toward achieving that end. We continually survey our skills in relation to the situational opportunities necessary for their implementation and, if we are reasonably well integrated into society, not only will we find opportunity to exercise our more highly developed skills, but we will also be rewarded for doing so. Under optimal conditions, the most highly developed skills from our stock pile of competencies will also be those which are most highly regarded by the external reward system. Put simply, this adds up to an obvious and fundamental fact of social life from which some interesting propositions may be derived, namely--optimal human adjustment occurs when the things that a person does best provide him with his greatest rewards.
>
> To place such stress upon the importance of skills to social adjustment may seem to belabor the obvious, but only because for the most of us, almost automatically and even without knowing why, in the process of growing up we have acquired skills in performing given acts that permit us to satisfy our needs--the socialization process has provided an easy way to gain the competencies that enable us to satisfy immediate needs and to effectuate long term goals as well. Moreover, these skills often carry with them a positive transfer value that allows us to move from situation to situation and still maintain our competency and reward levels. However, when this very convenient and proper meshing of socialized competencies and external rewards fails to occur, the consequences may not be so insignificant. The consequences may be more serious if the socialized competencies constitute a serious deterrent to the acquisition of new competencies, which may be critical for adjustment. It is not a lack of fit between socialization competencies and later adjustment skill requirements, but an active interference in the form of a motivational force between the former and the latter that is the keystone for the theory presented here.

The first thing of importance in this statement is the proposition that a person is motivated to do the things he can do best. He is motivated to do the things he does best because they provide him with the strongest feelings of competence, which in the motivational framework of the theory, is a highly desired state of being. Thus, if a person has a variety of competencies, if ranked hierarchically in terms of his degree of competency or mastery represented by them, those competencies closest to the top of the order would be those he would be most motivated to exhibit because they do the most to enhance this sense of competency.

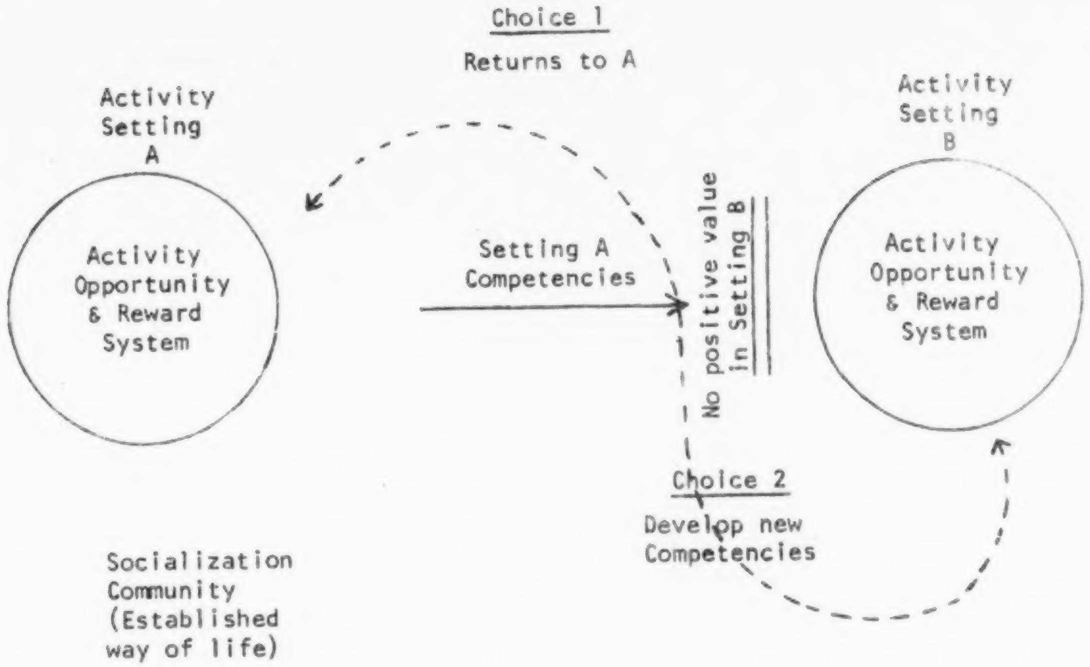
Which skills, however, get exercised and which do not is not a matter solely dependent upon the wishes of the actor. The situational context opportunities and sanctions, along with the action intentions of the actor all go together to determine which behaviors will be exhibited and which will not be exhibited. Thus we continually scan the external situation to appraise the hierarchy of personal competencies in relation to opportunity for their situational implementation and, on the basis of an assessment of maximal relevance based on this combination of competencies and opportunities, a decision is made to exercise that combination of competencies providing the greatest amount of competency reward. By reward here we mean both intrinsic, i.e., purely the feeling of being competent in the White sense and by those things valued by social and market place standards.

So, since few of us have complete control of the opportunities for situational implementation of our competencies, our actions represent a compromise between what we like and what is possible. But, if our existent competencies have prepared us for the situation in which we find ourselves, then it is likely that our most developed skills, that is those that give us the most intrinsic reward, are also the competencies that provide us with the greatest amount of social reward. This is true for Bill in Chapter 2. Those nonstandard skills that he had mastered during socialization not only brought him intrinsic satisfaction from their mastery, but they were also intimately related to his survival in the socialization setting. Moreover, the skills which provided him with the greatest intrinsic satisfaction also were the skills with the greatest survival value to him, i.e., hustling. Thus, within the ghetto setting Bill had achieved an optimal level of adjustment...the best of possible matchings between competencies and opportunities for situational implementation and reward. The matching of these nonstandard competencies with the opportunity and reward structure in the employment setting would be difficult if not impossible.

So far we have described some general statements of a theoretical nature that apply most directly to circumstances where a competent person locates himself in situations that provide him with (1) the option to exercise his competencies (thereby providing intrinsic reward), and (2) survival or extrinsic rewards because the value of his competencies is appreciated and viewed as important for reasons of income acquisition and social sufficiency. But, problems ensue if a person competent in one activity setting, for whatever reasons, finds himself in another setting where his already established competencies have no transfer value, or, possibly, even negative transfer value. If exercised, such competencies have no positive survival utility since they are not required for adjustment in that setting, or such skills may be negatively viewed and therefore have negative utility. Established competencies would, under these conditions, be exercised only for their intrinsic value. To understand these consequences it is important that we take a look at a person and his pre-established competencies with respect to the possible adjustment outcomes in (1) the setting in which those competencies help to achieve a satisfactory adjustment and (2) settings where they do not aid social and economic adjustment. This will help us see the implications for the same individual where competencies vary in their transferability to other settings.

If a person competent in the adjustment skills for one set of surroundings, for whatever reasons, finds himself in another setting where his already established competencies have no positive transfer value, then two main possibilities are open to restore competencies to their level of desired utility (i.e., realistically maintain his sense of competency): he may (1) return to his "established" setting where his adjustment competencies are relevant; or, (2) develop new competencies needed to meet the adjustment requirements of the new activity setting. This situation and the action alternatives are illustrated in Figure 1 where the competencies necessary for satisfactory adjustment to Activity Setting A (those competencies possessed by the actor) are neither functional prerequisites nor functional equivalents to competencies required for adjustment to Activity Setting B.

Figure 4


Choice 1
Returns to A
Activity Setting A
Activity Opportunity & Reward System
Setting A Competencies
No positive value in Setting B
Activity Setting B
Activity Opportunity & Reward System
Choice 2
Develop new Competencies
Socialization Community (Established way of life)

Activity settings and activity environments

In Figure 4, "Setting A Competencies" in the center of the figure represent activity skills critical to survival and social sufficiency in that activity setting. Because in this instance "Activity Setting A" represents the socialization community, it also represents the activity environment where the individual's basic skills for dealing effectively with external forces were established, i.e., his socialization community. As noted earlier in this report, "Activity Environment" represents (a) formal and informal opportunities and (b) behavioral possibilities for learning skills; and, it should also be mentioned that it connotes (c) the existence of a system for rewarding some of those skills in ways that affect ones situational, i.e., material, adjustment in addition to the intrinsic gain he gets from exercising them. Any increase in these skills automatically increases immediate and possibly long term prospects for income acquisition and social sufficiency in that setting. In essence, a person high in these competencies is one who has mastered his culture: (1) he can perform with proficiency those adjustment skill requirements that are most highly rewarded in his established activity setting, and (2) those pre-established skills are positively related to the learning of adjustment skills for that setting. Bill, for example, was well adjusted to the ghetto community and could be expected to remain well adjusted over time because the skills he learned as a young child were positively related to learning the skills needed for adolescent adjustment and those skills are positively related to the learning of skills for young adulthood adjustment, and so on.

The point here is that a person who has mastered the adjustment competencies required for his socialization community can expect to be well integrated throughout the rest of his stay in that community because the skills at one point in time lead positively to the acquisition of skills required for adjustment at other points in time. Thus, the problems that can be expected to occur for a competent person, occur when he finds himself in a situation where the established competencies do not work. Then he is faced with a problem--a problem different from that of a person without well developed competencies moving from an activity setting where he is relatively incompetent to another activity where he is also incompetent because, according to our model, the competent person will be motivated to restore his sense of competency. That is, not only do we argue, along with White (1962), that there is a basic drive to be competent, but also, that competency maintenance is a drive force and that the strength of that drive is dependent upon the individuals repertoire of competencies and their adjustment value or reward potential in the activity setting in which he finds himself vis-a-vis their reward value in the activity setting where they were established. More will be said later about competency maintenance.

The horizontal arrow blocked by the two vertical lines is used to denote that Activity Setting A competencies will not have positive adjustment value in Activity Setting B, i.e., Activity Setting A competencies are neither functional prerequisites nor functional equivalents to Activity Setting B competencies; a person high in Activity Setting A competencies, but lacking in Activity Setting B competencies, will find that his established competencies will not be of positive adjustment value in Activity Setting B.

Thus, as shown in Figure 4, an individual proficient in the adjustment competencies critical to Setting A but who finds himself in Setting B, has two choices to reestablish his former level of competency: (1), he may elect to remain in Setting B and develop the appropriate Setting B adjustment skills (otherwise he will be incompetent); or, (2) he may return to Setting A.

The dotted lines extending from the blocked arrow in the figure represent these possibilities for reestablishing competency level when there is no positive transfer value of competencies from Activity Setting A to Activity Setting B. It is important to keep in mind, however, that, while a return to Setting A is a successful competency maintenance maneuver, it does not carry with it the potential for mobility and new rewards that would be afforded if (1) Setting A skills had a positive transfer value to Setting B, or (2) the individual was willing to temporarily suffer a loss in competency level in order to acquire the adjustment competencies appropriate to Setting B. It should also be added that if the individual chose the latter, i.e., to acquire the new competencies, a "loss" in competency level would probably be experienced by him, at least temporarily, during the learning of new competencies in Setting B. Under most conditions, of course, he would be free to return to Setting A and regain his original competency level at any point in time, either permanently or intermittently during the new learning process.

Transferable, irrelevant, and competing competencies

For most people changes in activity settings resulting in drastic and prolonged loss in competency level seldom occur. A person competent in one activity setting may find himself in a different activity setting where he is incompetent, but most often such occurrences result in a temporary loss to competency level. The person can be expected to either return to the original activity environment or one similar enough to it so that equity between competencies and rewards can be required. Such a situation would arise when a traveler visits a foreign country and finds it difficult to communicate, a civilian is drafted into the military, or a victim of a natural disaster finds himself momentarily helpless and uncertain about what actions to take. Persons skilled in the prior environment may be incompetent under such abnormal or temporary conditions, because either new and different adjustment competencies are required, or conditions require that individuals may temporarily lose the freedom to choose between different behavioral possibilities, e.g., either folkways or legal authorities dictate their behavior, as when a government changes hands.

But, what happens if a permanent shift in activity settings is required. Let us assume that a person from Setting A, after considering his wants and needs, decides that he prefers Setting B adjustment rewards. Let us assume further that he happens to be highly proficient in Setting A competencies, that he lacks Setting B competencies, and that the two sets of competencies are not functionally equivalent, i.e., a person highly proficient in nontransferable competencies.

This mis-matching of competencies is considerably more complicated than those situations where the person possesses transferable skills, or where he lacks both transferable and nontransferable skills. If the Setting A skills are transferable, he would, of course, experience no special problems in performing well in Setting B. He would not have to endure prolonged delay of reward because extensive training would not be required to gain proficiency in Setting B skills--he already has them. Under these conditions, the person would maintain his potential for acting competently even though a shift in activity settings occurred, because there is transferability in the critical adjustment skills for the two settings. A person successful in one activity setting would be successful in the other.

Similarly, someone not very competent in Setting A skills experiences no necessary incongruency or loss in competency status in Setting B because his competency level and rewards probably have not changed if he is incompetent in both settings.

Thus, if a person possesses transferable competencies, he can expect to regain his competency level shortly after transfering from one setting to another; if a person is *incompetent* in one setting and changes to another where he is also incompetent (i.e., *lacking* in both *transferable* and *nontransferable* competencies) he will not experience problems due to changes in activity settings. In both cases, no loss in competency level is experienced and, in consequence, we could expect that these persons would probably be as well adjusted in Setting B as they were in Setting A because no violence was done to the established competency and reward levels. Howpever, when nontransferable competencies are present the prediction of performance from one activity setting to another is more difficult.

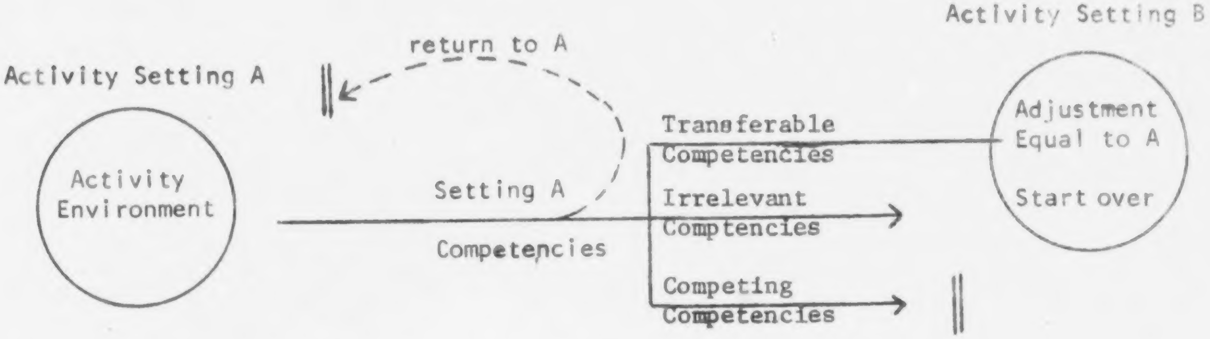
Nontransferable competencies may be thought of as being of two types; *irrelevant* competencies or *competing* competencies (just as nonstandard competencies may either be irrelevant or negatively related to job performance).

Irrelevant competencies are established competencies that are unrelated to the acquisition of adjustment skills in another activity setting, e.g., Setting A competencies neither facilitate nor hamper the acquisition of Setting B adjustment skills. Although related positively to adjustment in Setting A, these same competencies are unrelated, i.e., neither positively nor negatively related to adjustment in Setting. B.

Competing competencies, the second type of nontransferable competencies, present a different picture. Like irrelevant and transferable competencies, they too are positively related to adjustment in Setting A; but competing competencies are negatively related to Setting B adjustment. Their presence constitutes a condition that inhibits the development of Setting B competencies.

Thus, if we disregard "return to Setting A" in Figure 1 as a competence maintenance possibility--meaning the person with a large repertoire of Setting A competencies must remain in Setting B--then we can see that any prediction about behavior involving adjustment to Setting B will depend upon the nature of already established competencies. These Setting A competencies can be: *transferable* (positively related to Setting B adjustment); *irrelevant* (unrelated to Setting B adjustment); or, *competing* (negatively related to Setting B adjustment). These adjustment possibilities are illustrated in Figure 2. The relevancy of these different types of employment will be discussed later and are illustrated in Figure 2. But, before discussing these implications it will be important to complete the theory-building portion of this report by discussing competency maintenance in terms of two types of efficacy.

Figure 2


Activity Setting B
return to A
Activity Setting A
Adjustment
Equal to A
Transferable
Competencies
Activity
Environment
Setting A
Irrelevant
Comptencies
Start over
Competencies
Competing
Competencies

Efficacy and competency

We can add another dimension to our discussion if we were to view the foregoing discussion in terms of personal and environmental efficacy. Essentially, we have emphasized that social adjustment is a balance between certain "person-centered" variables on the one hand and certain "environment-centered" variables on the other. On the person centered side of the equation are the individual's repertoire of competencies. These competencies represent his potential to act competently. This can be expressed as a measure of personal efficacy, henceforth "PE": a person would rank "high" on PE if he has developed a large number of competencies and is highly proficient in their expression; a person would rank "low" on PE if he is generally lacking in competencies and not highly proficient even in those which he possesses.

A person's PE, however, really tells us only a very limited amount of information. It gives us some indication of an individual's potential to act competently, but will tell nothing about how well he has been able to actualize that potential to effectuate personal goals, intrinsic or extrinsic. To use his potential he must be in an activity setting where he can gain the desired adjustment awards for the expression of those competencies. The individual's ability to gain rewards for his competencies will be expressed as his environmental efficacy (EE).

What is meant, then, when we say people are motivated to do the things they can do best is that people are drawn to activity settings where the combination of behavioral opportunities, freedoms, and adjustment rewards are such that they can display their most advanced competencies and be favorably evaluated. Further, they will withdraw from situations where their competencies are not regarded favorably. Thus, successful adjustment is a balance between "person-centered" (competencies) and the external surroundings (activity setting--adjustment skills and their rewards): a balance determined by an individual's repertoire of competencies, i.e., his potential to act competently (his PE), and his degree of control over external forces that regulate the freedom of expression and transfer value for his competencies (his EE).

Essentially, this relationship between personal efficacy (PE) and environmental efficacy (EE) is a power relation in the sense Karl Deutsch defines power, i.e., the difference between the amount of change one can impose on his environment and the amount of change imposed on him by the environment. The greater the number of transferable competencies (or, the greater his power to make his competencies transferable, i.e., his capacity to regulate environmental forces), the greater the control over his personal, social, and economic adjustment, i.e., the greater the power to produce his own reinforcements with the least personal costs. By contrast, the greater the number of nontransferable competencies, particularly competing competencies rather than irrelevant competencies, the less the individual's "power" to survive and thrive in activity settings outside of his established community: Thus transferability of competency equals power.

The PE:EE balance, then, reflects the level of adjustment success in any given activity setting. Where a high PE person has managed to actualize his potential and also gains adjustment reward for doing so, a condition of *High PE:high EE* exists. This represents a very satisfactory relationship between the individual and the environment. It means that a competent person is rewarded for his competencies by receiving the highest level of adjustment value possible for the exercise of those competencies. Bill in the ghetto environment is an example; the competency-adjustment-reward relationship is ideal.

Where PE is high and EE is low, the person's relation to his environment is less satisfactory--his level of adjustment and potential for achieving external goals would be low. *High PE:low EE* would represent the condition of a person with a high level of competencies, but competencies with little or no transfer value because they are not critical to adjustment in activity settings other than the established setting. This is a situation comparable to Bill's in the JOBS program. Under these conditions, competency maintenance would motivate the individual to increase EE, thereby bringing it into balance with his established competencies, PE. Two possibilities are available to him. He may try to locate elsewhere--in an activity setting where his competencies have positive adjustment value, (as already illustrated in Figure 2); or, he may remain in the activity setting and improve his EE standing by developing new and appropriate adjustment skills.

Where PE is high and EE is low, we can presume that competence maintenance would move the individual to bring EE in line with PE rather than developing a new set of skills to make PE appropriate to the adjustment requirements of a new activity setting. Otherwise, he will have to endure being incompetent, something which may not have occurred before. A young child who does not experience himself as a failure until he goes to school would be an example of such a situation where escape is not an option since a large portion of his day for some time to come, regardless of how unpleasant and humiliating to his sense of competency such experiences may be to him, will have to be spent at school.

This *High PE:low EE* condition presents a very unstable situation. Under this condition the individual will be motivated to increase his EE and thereby bring it into line with PE. While withdrawal to more rewarding activity settings or the acquisition of new learning are the two most obvious recourses to restore an acceptable *PE:EE* balance, other measures are also worth noting here even though they are not as immediately obvious. Namely, the adoption of either a (1) Person-blame or (2) System-blame belief and/or action orientation to justify or rationalize ones position in society.

Briefly, by "person blame," in this context, it is meant that a High PE individual in a low EE situation accepts *PE:EE* imbalance as equitable. Thus, he evaluates for PE, not by past experience in other settings where they have been effective, but by the adjustment criteria of the low EE activity setting in which he now finds himself. He manages to realign his *PE:EE* relationship psychologically by lowering his sense of PE, i.e., from High *PE:low EE* to Low *PE:low EE*. Such would be the case where a person high in Activity Setting A competencies finds himself in Activity Setting B where his competencies are not transferable in terms of their adjustment value, but, for whatever reasons, he adopts the Activity Setting B competencies' standards as more desirable, more "right," than his established competencies. Thus, his failure to adjust to Setting B immediately is viewed as a personal failure, i.e., person blame explanation, and he does not hold the Setting B adjustment requirements as prejudicial or unfair.

Such a situation might have existed for Bill, a person high in nonstandard competencies, if he could have been convinced that his nonstandard competencies were substandard and then convinced of the desirability and value of employment setting competencies over his pre-established competencies. But, such shift in values are unlikely, especially where so much past experience, personal esteem, social sufficiency, intrinsic gain, etc. has been associated with these established competencies. Therefore, he holds the validity of his competencies (i.e., rejects a person-blame explanation of his failure to adjust to the employment setting) and views negatively the adjustment competencies required for success in the employment setting, i.e., adopts a system-blame explanation. This *High PE:low EE* blame does not, however, inevitablv lead to a rejection of Setting B adjustment criteria. There are indeed many situations where the High PE person elects to remain in Setting B and tries to increase his PE by augmenting his competencies through the acquisition of situation B adjustment competencies. But such a person, although possibly frustrated initially by the inappropriateness of his competencies to the requirements of the new activity setting, does not necessarily devalue already existent competencies (past immigrants for example). If they did, they might, in consequence, think of themselves as not capable of adapting to the new setting.

"Devaluating" is used to mean that, not having appropriate Setting B competencies, they may be led to believe that they are incompetent because they would appear incompetent to those who could adjust to Setting B (the Low EE setting), regardless of their adjustment level in Setting A (the High EE setting). Thus, viewing themselves as incompetent, they might not try to learn new adjustment skills for fear of failure, and this in turn might create a subculture of submission and nonachievement built around an introjected person-blame orientation toward failure.

A system-blame orientation would be just opposite. Here the person(s) is convinced that the adjustment skills requirements for Setting B ought to change in relation to already existent competencies, PE. It is felt that the external criteria that determine what Setting B skills are to be valued and rewarded as adjustment skills ought to allow transferability for competencies not routinely regarded as adjustment skills (i.e., non-standard competencies). Thus, *PE:EE* relationships would be brought into alignment by changing environmental efficacy, i.e., EE, while keeping PE constant. On a grand scale, this is what happens when social revolutions occur. The point being that if enough people feel the adjustment requirements are such that the external system, rather than existing competencies is the cause for personal failure, they will demand that the system re-adjust its values so that those potentially competent, *High EE* but with *low EE*, will be able to actualize their competencies with rewards.

Before examining these *PE:EE* balances and their implications as conceptual dimensions further, it would be advisable to examine each PE and EE more closely in light of our earlier discussion.

Personal efficacy

By ones potential to act competently we mean a complex of skills or even many skills that go together so as to enable a person to satisfactorily perform a particular role, or even a number of roles. The term refers to the total repertoire of competencies that one could draw upon to enhance his sense of competency and level of adjustment, given the appropriate activity system, i.e., opportunity and rewards.

When we say that a person will do the things he can do best, we imply a compromised relationship between the self and the external world, the most workable relationship between one's competencies and external opportunity to express those competencies to effectuate personal goals, i.e., the best *PE:EE* relation achievable where PE refers to the totality of one's repertoire of competencies and EE depends largely upon the utility function of competencies in one or more activity setting. Most of us have a variety of skills, or a complex of skills that go together to produce a role which can be brought into play and, with a little give and take, lead to a balanced relationship with the social and economic reward system that influences our behavior. Sometimes we accept hardships in order to do the things we really "want" to do; however, few are willing to sacrifice a great deal if the only thing that they can do well has no market value; or, because they choose to persist in doing something that has no social or economic reward level.

EE

As indicated earlier, by environmental efficacy we mean the individual's capacity or power to gain adjustment value or as much adjustment value as possible for his personal capabilities, his PE. EE level--high or low--depends largely upon the utility function of one's competencies. Just what actually constitutes the "environment," the "external," or how and who determines the adjustment skills requirements or the incremental gains for proficiency in these adjustment skills could quickly lead us well beyond the scope of this report.

The one thing important for us here is that "the" environment means an activity setting in which the individual has to function to thrive and/or survive. How well he manages to cope with the adjustment skills requirements determines his level of social and economic adjustment success (personal success may be another matter if there is a poor matching of PE with the activity setting adjustment skill requirements.)

This brings us to a distinction that should be made with respect to the difference between surviving and thriving. We have used both terms when discussing theoretical ideas on adjustment in the abstract. But, from here on, the discussion will be concerned with thriving rather than surviving when discussing adjustment skill requirements. Our concerns are with the problems of adjustment that occur after the basic problems of subsistence, i.e., the basic requirements for food, shelter, clothing, have been met. Thus, we assume a *High PE:low EE* relationship, representing a situation where the external behavioral opportunities and their corresponding rewards are such that a person has a higher liklihood of thriving than if the relationship were *High PE:low EE*. But even where EE is low, the person will still be likely to survive in the physical sense--even though he might fall far short of some ideal in meeting both his physical and his psychological needs.

Another important distinction concerning EE components pertains to the differential role of external behavioral-reward possibilities in the development of competencies and their later utilization as adjustment skills.

We have spoken of competencies as having developed by and large in some established activity setting, usually referred to as the socialization community. The reason for this emphasis derives from a main theoretical position that these already existent competencies influence later adjustment in ways and degrees that are yet to be fully recognized. Thus, our effort has been devoted to building some adjustment models around these past-developments, i.e., the _transferability_ of competencies, rather than how or why they evolve in the first place. So when we speak of EE, it is meant to apply to the concerns centering around the transferability of already existing competencies.

Considerable attention has been given to the development of competencies (Chapter 3), where it was shown that the environment, particularly the behavioral possibilities, is of extreme importance. The EE, however, is of somewhat different environmental significance. The role of EE in the socialization community, put concisely, serves as a means for reality testing of already developed competencies, i.e., do the things I am good at doing provide me with environmental control? Thus, it serves more as a means for assessing personal worth and power to control one's future, _vis a vis_ external forces. In a sense, this argues that a person's self-esteem is linked to competencies. To be able to do things well is important, but more important is to be in an activity setting where one can achieve maximum rewards for these activities.

Motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic

Extrinsic: goal objects The reason a person might give up his established activity setting for another is because rewards, unavailable in his present activity setting, become desirable. He tries to obtain these rewards and hopes, of course, that his already existing skills, or readily acquirable skills, will help him to achieve them. But, he may find that the old means-ends relationships no longer work; then, as shown in Figure 1, he can give up the new goals if the personal costs are not too high and if freedom to return is an option; or, if the costs are not too high he will attempt to gain those goals by realigning the *PE:EE* balance.

So, the *PE:EE* is essentially an expression of means-ends matching which not only tells us what has to be done to achieve a goal "out there," but it also tells us whether or not it is possible to achieve the goal, and it tells us what has to be done to achieve the necessary ends matching (i.e., adjustment skills necessary to achieve a desired goal). Thus, the instrumental value of one's competencies, transferability of competencies in relation to a specific goal, tells us something about the attainability of that goal for a particular individual. If the attainability of the goal is high, then effort will be made to achieve it. If the personal cost, however, is too great in view of the goal payoff, then the person will probably abandon his effort for the goal.

So, where there is some intrinsic goal, and a reasonable matching of means-ends relationships, i.e., one's already existing competencies and his capability to acquire other necessary adjustments skills which may not already be in his repertoire of competencies are highly probable, the individual can then be expected to organize his activities around the attainment of these external goals.

When this occurs, to say that a person is doing the thing he does best, carries with it the added significance that those "things he does best" are important because of their instrumental value in getting him somewhere that he wants to go. The important thing to keep in mind here is that where an acceptable *PE:EE* relationship is possible, the person is not simply "doing the things that he does best" for the sake of competency maintenance alone; he does so with a view to obtaining long term payoffs from "end" goal achievements as well.

Intrinsic motivation: competency maintenance Goal objectives were viewed as existing on the external or "environment" side of the *PE:EE* formula. They are "acquired" and often may be thought of as end states in tangible and concrete terms. Recognizing full well that the "desire" and "drive" for them are internal, let us nevertheless emphasize that goal objects are unattained things "out there"--a good job, money, a professional degree, a car, a house, etc.

Throughout this report we have attributed an intensive motivational force to competencies; this constitutes one of the key theoretical positions. When we say people are motivated to do the things they do best, we also have implied that competencies carry with them a drive force--or at least, an intrinsic relation between competencies and motivation in the sense that a person will attempt to exercise these competencies.

This "need" to exhibit competencies--to engage in proficient behaviors, carries with it its own reward and is used here in a way that goes beyond White's idea of competency motivation.

White emphasizes the motivation to be competent as a linking operation between the self and the environment--competency motivation as used by White means a drive to have a causal relation to one's environment. The point here is that competencies, when they evolve in the original activity environment, automatically have that causal effect or environmental efficacy relation to the environment. That is why they come to be acquired, *but these competencies may not have a similar causal relation (transferability) to other activity settings*.

Further, because these are skills which the individual has invested his self in and has built his self image around, they are his most important "behaviors." *They have enabled him to establish a level of "competency to which he has grown accustomed and he will likely try to maintain that level of competency in a miscellany of activity settings, and hopefully, by the same means-ends, i.e., competency-reward, relationships*.

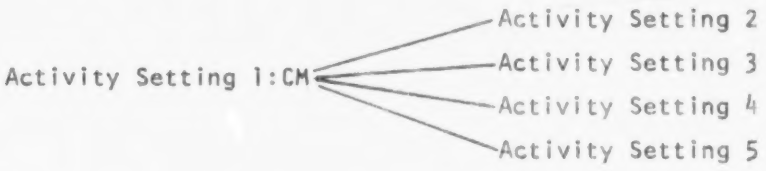
Competency maintenance, then, has two elements to it; *first*, the desire to maintain or enhance, but not experience loss in, the level of competency achieved in the socialization community. It is desired that the *PE:EE* relationship achieved in the socialization community be maintained in other activity settings as well. *Second*, one's competencies may be thought of as differing in degrees of proficiency from those in which he is most proficient to those of least proficiency. We presume that the person is most desirous to exhibit those competencies in which he is most proficient. Thus, in assessing the behavioral possibilities in a given situation, he is likely to assess those possibilities in terms of this hierarchy of competencies. Actually, these two components of competency maintenance (CM) go together and in the last analysis become indistinguishable.

The important thing to note is that the maintenance of this stock pile of competencies, with its freedom of expression and customary level of rewards, constitutes a drive force in its own right and is fairly independent of external reward. At the risk of sounding more behavioristic than is meant, a person and the skills he represents are a sort of performing organism motivated to locate itself in circumstances where it can perform at its best. To display one's competencies is important psychologically because it constitutes proof to the individual that he is capable--independent of the immediate external reward for those competencies--even if he happens to be in an activity setting where his major competencies have no adjustment value.

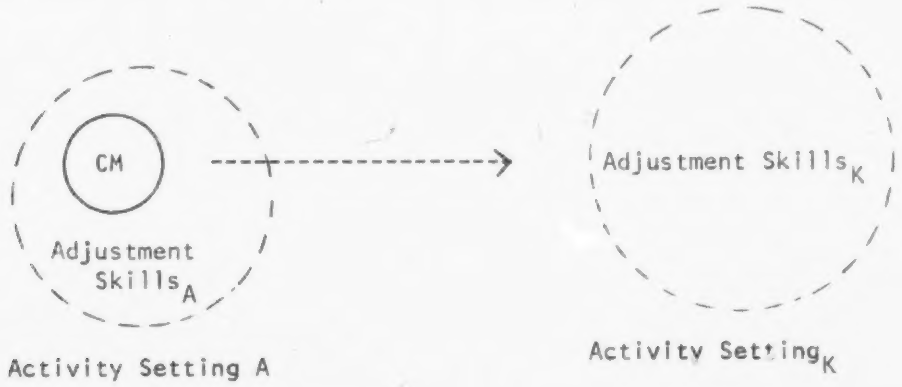
The suspicion here is that competency maintenance is the force that ultimately determines how well the *PE:EE* relation will work out for any given activity environment, rather than external goals or other factors in either the person-centered or environment-centered components. Competency maintenance rather than external payoff (or the two taken together) will tell us more about what a person will do in a given situation (activity setting) than either knowledge of the external payoff, or how strongly the person might be motivated to achieve that payoff.

It would be informative to illustrate an important difference between persons who link competencies with external payoff goals and those who fail to do so. Where the competencies become linked to goals, they take on an instrumental value and CM, as such, is symbolically reified by the goal achievement. Under these conditions, the person psychologically knows he is competent; he is socially recognized as such and is rewarded accordingly. Thus, the continued achievement of these rewards largely is of importance because of this CM value. This is implied in the meaning and significance of a *High PE:high EE* relationship and is critical to understanding the relationship of the competing competencies notion to employment. *High PE:high EE* means a history of successful adaptation; it reflects what happens when the socialization process works to our benefit and the proper meshing of socialization competencies and adjustment skill requirements can continuously occur almost automatically whether in mazeway or nonmazeway space.

Whereas *PE:EE* describes the person-to-environment relationship, CM does more; it tells us something of how the *PE:EE*, as an experience, goes through the minds of men. It refers to internal dynamics; and insofar as our present interests are concerned, it is of special importance to understanding: (1) how various types of competencies (transferable, irrelevant, competing) come to be developed during socialization; and (2) how the individual reacts in assessing his action alternatives when there is the possibility for selecting from a number of activity settings, i.e.,


Activity Setting 1:CM
Activity Setting 2
Activity Setting 3
Activity Setting 4
Activity Setting 5

The prediction is that he will be drawn toward those Activity Settings where his already existent adjustment skills or readily acquirable adjustment skills have highest level of CM to retain balance--in other words, where his present adjustment skills have the greatest potential value as functional prerequisites for success in that activity setting. A way, then of describing a persons present action (or what he is likely to be doing at any one point in time) could be diagrammed as follows:


CM
Adjustment Skills$_A$
Activity Setting A
Adjustment Skills$_K$
Activity Setting$_K$

This is, in fact, an extension of the statement made earlier, that a person will do the things he does best. The figure says that an individual will do his best to maintain the highest competency level possible under the conditions imposed by the activity environment (or setting) in which he finds himself. The dotted arrow in the direction of Activity Setting K is simply to show that competency maintenance may be best served by carrying out actions that will move a person to some other activity. Competency maintenance requires that he get out of a setting that does not reward his adjustment skills and into one that does reward them--rather than either staying in Activity Setting A and improving ones Setting A adjustment skills or simply settling for the level of competency, resulting from adjustment capabilities in Setting A. All of this turns on how a person feels about the opportunity to express his competencies and their adjustment payoff value under the condition of the activity setting in which he finds himself.

As stated earlier, optimal human adjustment occurs when a person's greatest rewards come from doing things he does best, i.e., a person's highest capability for meeting the adjustment skill requirements occurs when his CM is also at the highest level. This may seem redundant, but it is not, since a very high degree of similarity must exist between established competencies, and the adjustment skill requirements that must be present if CM and the activity setting adjustment are to be positively correlated. (Under competing competencies, CM and activity setting adjustment are negatively related; irrelevant competencies means no relationship or an insignificant correlation between these.)

Implications

The individual appraises the goodness-of-fit between himself and the activity settings in which he finds himself and on the basis of this self assessment, attempts to locate himself in activity settings that provide him with the best sense of competency gratification.

To achieve this, the individual scans the external environment and appraises his relationship to that environment in terms of (1) his hierarchy of competencies and (2) their transituational relevancy. In consequence, he will attempt to move toward the activity settings where those activities at the top of the hierarchy are maximally relevant to the external reward system; and, conversely, he will move away from those activity settings where these same competencies provide the least (or even negative) reward.

Established competencies have an important "motivational" effect on adjustment to employment. The accuracy of any predictions on how well a person will adjust to the world of work, or to employment training programs, will depend upon: (1) the number and level of proficiency of skills in his repertoire of competencies and (2) the functional equivalency or transferability of these competencies across different activity settings.

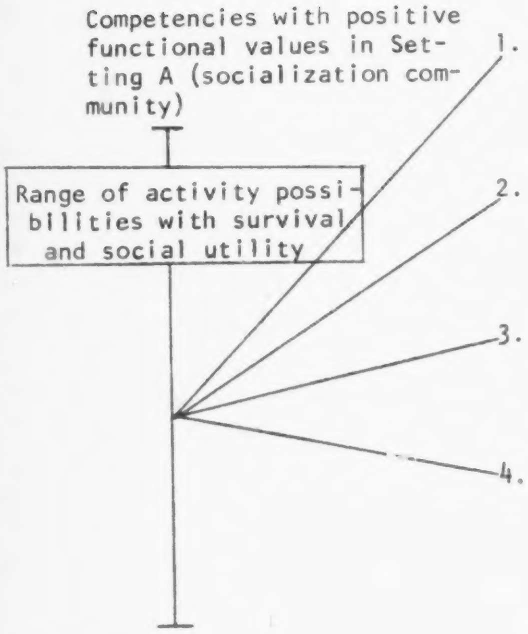
Figure 3 focuses more closely on the adjustment relevancy of these different types of competencies to other activity settings, and how the capacity to adapt might be improved by remediation programs.

Transferable competencies Where competencies have a positive transfer value, there will be little or no need for outside assistance to maximize adjustment. The main item of concern is to maximize degree of functional equivalency, i.e., how the matching of these existent skills and situational requirements can be arranged so as to maximize the adjustment potential for the established competencies. Since a one-to-one relation in skill adjustment value from one situation to another is unlikely, there may be need for guidance to ensure the best matching of Setting A competencies with Setting B behavioral possibilities. The problem is relatively simple, requiring only the addition of supplementary training to the normal routine of activities. But, even without outside assistance, the chances for successful adjustment to Setting B are high, provided that there is motivation to secure Setting B adjustment rewards (see Fig. 3).

Irrelevant competencies Where past competencies have no transfer value from one activity setting to another, then intervention must include (a) reorientation and (b) the acquisition of new competencies. While he may possess no transferable competencies, the person with irrelevant competencies has, nevertheless, demonstrated capacity to adjust in one activity setting and probably can do it again if motivated; i.e., desirous of Setting B adjustment rewards. Some reorientation may be necessary to familiarize the person with the newness of the situation — i.e., what skills are required for adjustment and their relative reward values — so that he may be realistic about setting his goals, identifying and acquiring the behaviors necessary

Figure 3.

Functional utility of competency
from one activity setting to another


Competencies with positive functional values in Setting A (socialization community)
Range of activity possibilities with survival and social utility

Competency value in Setting B	Adjustment value in Setting B	Corrective Treatment for Setting B adjustment	Possibility for adjustment success in Setting B
1. TRANSFERABLE →	FUNCTIONAL	Possibly none-- Guidance to maximize transfers	+++ →
2. IRRELEVANT →	NONFUNCTIONAL	Redirection Training Experience	+- →
3. COMPETING		Therapy (?) Experience Remotivation (?)	?? -- →
4. INCOMPETENT	NONFUNCTIONAL (Most likely lacks physical & pyschological capacity)	Training	?? --

to achieve those goals; and, what expectations he can realistically hold for affectuating those goals if the new adjustment skills are acquired.

When irrelevant rather than transferable competencies are present, more than supplementary training is needed. When competencies in a prior setting are irrelevant to competencies in a new setting, training to develop new adjustment skills, rather than to upgrade already existent skills, must be the primary concern for training. Because established competencies are unrelated to new learning, adjustment cannot be expected to proceed as readily as the learning of existing competencies. In short, we can presume that the chances are fairly good that a person with irrelevant competencies will adjust satisfactorily to a new setting — especially, if opportunity for the learning of new adjustment skills is made possible.

Competing competencies Where past competencies seriously interfere with the acquisition of new ones, the intervention task is most demanding and its probable consequences less certain. Suffice it to say at this point, that effective help, when and where possible, requires (a) the detection and (b) neutralization of competing competencies, in addition to (c) reorientation and (d) training. If our overall assumptions are correct, those persons with competing competencies are the least likely to adjust and re-establish a prior competency level in activity settings outside of the socialization community, with or without intervention--even though the motivation to do so may be very high.

Peter Drucker, in the charter issue of Careers Today magazine, said, "A job is only a way to find out who you are." Drucker's statement has a lot of wisdom behind it, but let us look at its application and relevance to the present discussion. For those youths with irrelevant or transferable competencies (or, even the relatively incompetent in these skill areas), the conventional intent of this statement is applicable. They do not really have a strong sense of self, at least not a well formed sense of self-as-behavior, because their competencies are not well developed, or if well developed, have not really withstood a test of operations in the world of work. They are yet to find out what they can do well and what they cannot do well in that setting. Their identity is based, not so much upon competencies, but upon some hope that when they get through the yawning gap in development between childhood and the first full-time job, they will have learned the relevant competencies.

By contrast those with a large repertoire of nonstandard competencies have a rather well developed sense of the self-as-behavior. So what they learn from the job setting is not so much "who they are"--they already know that. What they learn is the appropriateness of who they are to the behavioral criteria for successful adjustment on the job. The job to them is not an opportunity to test one's abilities to develop skills. They know that they are capable and have a prior identity already derived on the basis of those capabilities evidenced in their nonstandard skills.

Thus, in a sense, Drucker's statement may be particularly appropriate to the person with competing competencies. The person with well developed nonstandard competencies has a pre-employment established identity built around those competencies, and when faced with the demands of employment, he quickly discovers who he is. Youths, on the other hand, who are low on nonstandard skills, do not so much find out "...who you are," as a result of having a job nearly as suddenly as do the youths with large numbers of nonstandard skills. What they discover is "...what they might become."